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Neuroscience and Galen: Body, Selfhood and the Materiality of Emotions on the Early Modern Stage

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

NEUROSCIENCE AND GALEN:
BODY, SELFHOOD, AND THE MATERIALITY OF EMOTIONS ON THE
EARLY MODERN STAGE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

BY

DEVON WALLACE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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This project grew out of a course I took with Dr. James Knapp on materiality in early modern culture. I became fascinated with humoral theory and with a great deal of help from Dr. Knapp, I wrote a seminar paper about the similarities between questions raised by Galenic humoralism and questions raised by our recent turn to neuroscience. Since then, Dr. Knapp has been an invaluable mentor. As my director, he has challenged me and led me to exciting new areas of research. I am deeply grateful for his encouragement, support, and guidance. Dr. Christopher Kendrick has been exceptionally generous with his time and advice. He consistently went above and beyond with insightful and very helpful feedback. My special thanks go to Dr. Suzanne Gossett, who is the most inspiring teacher I have ever known. Her passion for the works of Shakespeare is contagious. She strengthened my work by asking difficult questions. These three scholars have become highly significant figures in my life and their contributions to my intellectual growth go far beyond this dissertation.

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For Stephanie, with thanks

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: HUMORS, BRAIN CHEMISTRY, AND MATERIAL EMOTION

In August of 2002, the National Public Radio program *This American Life* dedicated an hour long show to looking at one chemical that profoundly impacts the human body in strange, exciting, and sometimes terrifying ways: testosterone. The program featured an interview with an anonymous man whose body, for medical reasons, had stopped producing testosterone. He lived without the chemical for four months before doctors caught the problem and reintroduced it to his body. It is not surprising that he felt his body undergo many changes over these months. However, the most significant changes that he noticed were not weight gain, hair loss or anything else he would normally associate with his physical body. Instead, he was surprised to find that the most essential, private, and enduring aspects of his personality were suddenly and dramatically altered. He explains, “Everything that I identify as being me, my ambition, my interest in things, my sense of humor, the inflection in my voice, the quality of my speech even changed in the time that I was without a lot of the hormone.”

“What happened after the testosterone was reintroduced?” asked Ira Glass, the show’s host. The man explains,

The introduction of testosterone returned everything. There were things that I find offensive about my own personality that were disconnected then. And it was nice to be without them. Envy, the desire to judge itself, I approached people with a humility that I had never displayed before.

He became aware that the very nature of his personality not only relied specifically on a chemical but that the healthy levels of the chemical created traits that he disliked. This knowledge initiated a crisis of identity. He began to question the nature of the relationship between his “self” and his body. He explains:

I grew up in a culture, like all of us, that divides the soul from the body. And that is your singleness, that is your uniqueness, and nothing can touch that. And then I go through this experience where I have small amounts of a bodily chemical removed and then reintroduced, and it changes everything I know as my self. And it violates the sanctity of that understanding, that understanding that who you are exists independent of any other forces in the universe. And that's humbling. And it's terrifying.

The anonymous man is describing a very complicated terror. He starts by conflating the notion of “personality,” “soul,” “singleness,” “uniqueness,” and “self.” It is deeply important for him to be able to believe that this ambiguous core of his being “exists independent of any other forces.” When he realizes that a physical material, one that can be chemically defined, studied under a microscope, and extracted from (or inserted into) his body, has such a profound effect on his understanding of this essence of his being, it challenges his very ability to know who he is.

Reflecting on this interview, Glass concludes:

I think when it comes to this stuff, most of us do not know what to believe. We're caught between thinking that our hormones and body chemistry can determine so much about our personalities and wanting to believe that they don't.

For many, the idea that “selfhood” can be described in material terms is profoundly unsettling. Questions about how to navigate the relationship between physiology and a personal, private sense of self have certainly been opened by the recent turn to neuroscience. For example, David Johnson Thornton claims that “the language of the

brain” is so powerful a vocabulary that people have come to see themselves as “neurochemical selves;” we now use neurochemical vocabulary to express our anxieties, articulate our hopes and dreams, and rationalize our disappointments (150). However, I argue that neither this concept of a material self nor the confusion about the desire to construct an immaterial identity is “new.” Instead, the language of neuroscience, which describes the body in psychophysiological terms, harkens back to an ancient system of belief: Galenic humoralism.

From antiquity until the turn of the nineteenth century, temperament, mood, and personality were believed to exist within, be managed by, and interact with material substance. Before the medical revolution of the late seventeenth century, early modern theories of anatomy and medicine were primarily based on the writings of Galen, who lived in the second century but was influenced by a much older medical and philosophical tradition. Around the turn of the seventeenth century, while Shakespeare, Jonson and their contemporaries were writing the drama that revolutionized the early modern stage, European culture was undergoing a similar, but opposite phenomenological shift: it moved away from the monistic view supported by humoralism towards what would eventually become identified with Cartesian dualism.

In this period, the playwrights raise the same central question that Glass asks: “to what extent can anyone have an emotional “self” that is autonomous from a tangible, mortal form?” Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth feels that her “self” is brave and ruthless, but is ashamed of her woman’s body with its cowardly “white heart” (2.2.62).¹ Is she her

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Shakespeare quotations are cited from the second edition of *The Norton Shakespeare*, adopted from the text established by *The Oxford Shakespeare*.

emotional body or something else? In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, two young, fickle lovers and the immortal fairy queen are completely overcome and emotionally transformed under the influence of love, contained in a physical liquid potion. Is love anything more than their bodies' reactions to the overwhelming substance? These questions can only be asked when one lacks the ability to rely on a dualist distinction between mind and body, self and form, emotion and materiality. However, these questions also depend on a desire for a sense of self that "exists independent of any other forces." This project will discuss what is at stake when the monist notion of emotional experience as physiology (supported by both Galenic and neuroscientific medical writing) interacts and conflicts with the dualistic notion of an autonomous and immaterial emotional self.

The Post-dualist Self: A Turn to Neuroscience

Ever since the term "neuroscience" was coined in the 1960's, this interdisciplinary field, which brings together biology, chemistry, and psychology, has brought a revolution in the ways that we are able to conceive of individual emotional consciousness. Neuroscience is increasingly permeating many aspects of contemporary culture. In 1990, the U.S. Congress designated the 90's as the Decade of the Brain, "to enhance public awareness of the benefits to be derived from brain research."² 23 years later, President Barack Obama pledged \$100 million to back a project intended to unlock the mysteries of the human brain. Increasingly, neuroscience is becoming integrated into all aspects of inquiry about the human experience. The brain is becoming the focal point

² See the Library of Congress's account of "The Decade of The Brain" at www.loc.gov/loc/brain

of more and more medical research, as well as diagnostic and treatment tools.

According to American Enterprise Institute scholar Sally Satel and psychologist Scott O. Lilienfeld, the idea that the study of the workings of the human brain can answer questions about the enduring mysteries of psychology and philosophy has become increasingly fashionable. It is now so prevalent that contemporary thinkers, in both the sciences and the humanities, are becoming what they call “neurocentric.” “Brain scans have been used to help politicians understand and manipulate voters, determine guilt in court cases, and make sense of everything from musical aptitude to romantic love” (Satel and Lilienfeld 1). They argue that this “view of the mind” risks undermining our most deeply held ideas about selfhood, free will, and personal responsibility.

Certainly, the influx of knowledge about the physical brain is opening territory to the neuroscientist that was once reserved for philosophers. According to Patricia Smith Churchland, who is best known for launching the subfield of “neurophilosophy,” “The questions, whether asked by philosophers or neuroscientists, are all part of the same general investigation” (2). She claims, “Top-down strategies (as characteristic of philosophy, cognitive psychology, and artificial intelligence research) and bottom-up strategies (as characteristic of the neurosciences) for solving the mysteries of mind-brain function should not be pursued in icy isolation from one another” (3). Martha Farah, coiner of the term “neuroethics,” claims that the recent findings of neuroscience call for a new approach to the most basic phenomenological questions and necessitates a new approach to ethics because, “in principle, and increasingly in practice, we can understand the human mind as part of the material world. This has profound implications for how we

regard and treat ourselves and each other. It gives us powerful new ways to predict and control human behavior and a jarringly material view of ourselves” (1).

According to Owen Flanagan, the former president of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, the predominant theoretical approach that many neuroscientists rely on is “identity theory.” This theory assumes:

All mental states are in fact brain states. We access the surface structure of our minds first-personally, in a phenomenological manner, in terms of how a particular experience feels to us. But first-person access fails to get at the neural deep structure of our mental states. Only impersonal, or third person, techniques can do this. (Flanagan 595)

According to this viewpoint, “what there is and all there is, is physical” (Flanagan 594).

Jon Mills is one of many psychologists to express concern about the implications of materialism. In his article, “Five Dangers of Materialism,” Mills defines materialism as “a reaction against and rejection of Cartesian dualism that posits a non-extended ‘thinking substance’ associated with an immaterial mind” (7). He acknowledges that there are many forms of dualism, including:

the Platonic distinction between appearance and reality; Kant’s separation of phenomena from noumena; the ontological distinctions between being and essence; the dialectically opposed forces and manifestations of consciousness; and the epistemological chasms between the knowing subject and object. (7)

He does not defend ontological dualism, but argues that materialist conceptions of mind pose many problems. Specifically, he points to “(a) the displacement of an ontology of consciousness, (b) a simplistic and fallacious view of causality, (c) the loss of free will, (d) renunciation of the self, and (e) questionable judgments concerning social valuation” (5). Critics like Mills regularly (and correctly) credit the very recent neurobiological

boom with the increasingly materialistic worldview but, as Elena Carrera points out, they do not account for the fact that this approach is not new:

Some of the research conducted in ‘affective neuroscience’ in the last two decades has become closer to the Aristotelian and Galenic approaches by questioning traditional views of cognition and affect as separable (and often opposing) forces or processes within the mind, suggesting that they are interrelated processes, and that their distinction is phenomenological, not ontological. (Carrera 17)

In *Shakespeare’s Brain* (2001), Mary Thomas Crane refers to the work of cognitive scientists who discuss the embodiment of thinking and feeling including Gerald Edelman’s *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire* (1992), Antonio Damasio’s *Descartes’ Error* (1994), and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999). In her introduction, she cites a passage from Stephen Kosslyn and Oliver Koenig’s *Wet Mind*: “the mind is what the brain does” (4). She claims that this sums up the dominant cognitive position and, in this way, “contemporary cognitive theory resembles the pre-Cartesian, Galenic materialism that shaped early modern concepts of the body and mind” (17). In other words, early moderns, like neurobiologists, understand feeling and thought to occur not within a mind, but within the substance of a material body.

The Pre-dualist Self: A Return to Galen

Galenic humoralism does not provide a systematic way of understanding the way that the body worked and experienced the world. In fact, by the early modern period, there were many contrasting and inconsistent interpretations of Galen. William Kerwin argues, “The discourses of humoral embodiment are so ubiquitous and so multiple as to have no coherence unless accompanied by other narratives” (195). Similarly, Ciobanu Estelle Antoaneta borrows Bakhtin’s term “heteroglossia” to describe “the co-existence of

discourses vying for hegemonic status” in renaissance medical discourse (125). In the twentieth century, historicists including Lily B. Campbell and John W. Draper recovered humoralism and approached it as a key that allowed them to understand early modern physiology. In 1946, Louise C. Turner Forest sternly criticized her contemporaries, claiming that the concept of “Elizabethan psychology” as it was conceived by the critics in the first half of the 20th century was “erudite nonsense,” and that her contemporaries’ understanding of a comprehensible, definable humoralism was more “the creation of our own minds than a resurrection of sixteenth-century reality” (651-52). Instead, she argues,

The truth is that Elizabethan psychology was neither exact nor consistent, and could not possibly have been used in the way we have been led to believe. This is simply precluded by its very nature. Figurative in and of itself one moment, and yet concrete the next, Elizabethan psychology is a hodge-podge of utterly contradictory "facts," conflicting theories, hopelessly inter-mixed, overlapping terms, and extremely variable and ill-kept distinctions. (656)

Marjory E. Lange heeds this advice, but presents a counterclaim:

Even though the degree of consistency and coherent order that was expected in the centuries following the seventeenth is not an attribute of Renaissance medical interpretation, their physio-psychology has its regulating principals (19).

For example, in the humoral system the body is composed of four humors: black bile, the cold, dry humor associated with melancholy; phlegm, the cold, wet humor associated with passivity; yellow or red bile, the hot, dry humor associated with choler; and blood, the hot, wet humor associated with sanguinity. The four humors are also associated with the four seasons and the four elements (black bile with autumn and earth; phlegm with winter and water; blood with spring and air; yellow/red bile with summer and fire). Not only the human body, but everything in the natural world was composed of these same

four substances. Therefore, eating, drinking, touching, feeling, and even reading could impact the body's balance.³ The humoral body was inseparable “from the external elements on which it depends—air, food, drink, even astrological influences. Crucial to its understanding of physiology are notions of input and output” (Harris 14).

Early modern Galenists generally believed that the humors were produced in the liver, but different scholars and anatomists associated different organs with different humors. An imbalance of the humors can be caused by or cause both physical and spiritual diseases. In his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton cites Cornelius Agrippa's *The Nature of Spirits* and Levinus Lemnius's *The Secret Miracles of Nature*, claiming that both describe:

How the body, being material, worketh upon the immaterial soul, by mediation of the humours and spirits, which participate of both, and ill-disposed organs, Cornelis Agrippa hath discussed. For as anger, fear, sorrow, obtreaction, emulation, saith Lemnius, cause grievous diseases in the body, so bodily diseases affect the soul by consent... The body is the dwelling of the soul, her house, abode, and stay; and as a torch gives better light, a sweeter smell, according to the matter it is made of, so doth our souls perform all her actions, better or worse, as her organs are disposed. (374)

The language Burton uses in his explanation is a perfect example of why it is so difficult to cohesively summarize the early modern conception of material emotion. While Burton claims that the soul is immaterial, it is clearly impacted by “bodily diseases” including anger and fear. These emotions are caused, in part, by the concretely material “ill-disposed organs.” How does the relationship between the immaterial soul and the

³ In *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature* (2004), Elizabeth Spiller situates her argument about early modern reading practices within the context of humoralism. By focusing on the way that the body functions in a humoral world, she concludes that reading was understood to happen in and to the body; from the early modern perspective, what one reads cannot only morally but physically change who one is.

material body work? What is the physical essence of the passion? In Burton's monumental medical treatise, these questions remain unanswered. Although, it is unambiguous that Burton believes that the human body is physically moved and altered by the passions, he does not clearly establish how the movements of the body relate to the qualities of the soul.

According to the diverse early modern interpretations of Galenic humoralism, there is no emotional self that exists in a sovereign relationship to the forces of the body. Instead, in Louise M. Bishop's words, "Emotions are matter" (37).

Galenism conceives of an individual's feeling and thinking as derived from and reflection of the "matter"- humor in his body. Galenic theory, then, which was available to both reading and listening publics, attributes psychology, mentality, to the "stuff" of humors. And because these humors are one with the cosmos, so too the individual's humoral character is connected "literally," through the body as well as through emergently material words, to the external universe." (Bishop, 34-35)

For example, in *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604), Thomas Wright describes the relationship between the organs, the humors, the spirits, the character of man, and the soul.

We may gather how that the heart is the seat of our passions, that spirits and humours concur with them: here we may deduce a conclusion most certayne and profitable, that according to the disposition of the heart, humours and body, diverse sorts of persons be subject to diverse sorts of passions, and the same passion affecteth divers persons in divers manners: for as we see fire applied to drie wood, to iron, to flaxe, and gunpowder, worketh diverse wayes; for in wood it kindleth with some difficulty, and with some difficulty is quenched; but in flaxe soone it kindleth and quencheth, in yron with great difficulty is it kindled, and with as great extinguished, but in gunpowder it is kindled in a moment, and never can be quenched till the powder be consumed. Some men you shall see, not so soone angrie, not yet soone pleased, and such be commonly fleugmatike persons; others you have, soone angrie, soone friended, as those of a sanguine complexion, and therefore commonly they are called goodfellowes: others be hardly offended, and afterward, with extreame

difficulty reconciled, as melancholy men: others are all fiery, and in a moment, at every trifle they are inflamed, and till their heartes be consumed (almost) with choller, they never cease, except they be revenged. By this we may confirme that old saying to be true... the manners of the soule followe the temperature of the body. (D3r)

Wright first argues that the organ of the heart is where passions meet the humors of the body. He then claims that the literal heart influences moods, characteristics, and manners. I will discuss the centrality of the material organ of the heart in greater detail in chapter 5. Wright uses a lengthy analogy to make this claim. Wood, iron, flax, and gunpowder each react to flame differently. Similarly, phlegmatic, sanguine, melancholic, and choleric people all respond differently to the same passion. For Wright, this is not a dead metaphor. Instead, the flammability of these different substances represents a direct and vivid expression of his own knowledge of the body. Just as wood, iron, flax, and gunpowder burn differently because they are chemically different, the phlegmatic, sanguine, melancholic, and choleric individuals are also physically composed of different substance, and those substances respond differently to literal heat. Most importantly, he concludes that this heat of the body (the way that one's material humoral makeup responds with the heat of the embodied passion inside the organ of the heart) influences what the soul is. The quality of the soul and the character of the person are related to the temperature of the body.

Furthermore, the organs (which produced these humors) were “emotionally charged” and could affect the person without his or her intervention (Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* 10). Katherine Eisaman Maus explains, “[I]n vernacular sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century speech and writing, the whole interior of the body – heart, liver, womb, bowels, kidneys, gall, blood, lymph – quite often involves itself in the

production of the mental interior, of the individual's private experience" (195). Gail Kern Paster explains that humoral bodies are animated by forces called "passions," which are "imbued with moral density and spiritual import" and act within the body "just as the forces of wind and waves act in the natural world" (*Humoring the Body*, 6). When Paster claims that early modern writers typically "understand the nature of passions as liquid," she is not suggesting that one should take this claim metaphorically (4). Instead, she asserts that the human body literally moves with these passions; "the emotions actually were liquid forces of nature" (4).

Early modern writers answer questions about what these passions are, where they originate from, and to what extent they could be controlled with radically inconsistency. For example, in *The Myserie of the Holy Government of Our Affections* (1620), Thomas Cooper recognizes that many of his contemporaries hold the belief that bodily humors drive the passions. However, he claims, "The Affections proceed from the Soule, and not the Bodie, not the Humours" (B15v-B16r). Unlike Burton, Cooper imagines a soul, which exists as the origin of affection, to be entirely independent of the body. For Cooper, passions are not physical products of the embodied humors. They are intangible elements which "give fuell to our desires, & bellows there unto" (B16r). Passions figure forth the "desires of the mind, in the outward man" (Cooper B16r). Therefore, the source of human desire becomes a question of spirituality, not physicality. In her seminal volume, *The Body Embarrassed* (1993), and its successor, *Humoring the Body* (2004), Paster exhaustively demonstrates that, for an early modern, humoral physiology was not only a tool to describe human character, but was a ubiquitous, intensely corporeal, "lived-in-the-body" reality. She argues that the relationship between the humors and their

influence on the body is not one of cause and effect but of equation. Too much choler does not cause anger; instead choler is anger. Mental imbalance is humoral imbalance. Paster argues that the questions of selfhood and questions of the body are inseparable.

Paster's book grows out of, and contributes to, the burgeoning field of "the history of emotions." In response to the "dramatic explosion of interest in emotions throughout a wide variety of disciplines as well as around the world of research and scholarship" the International Society for Research on Emotions (ISRE) was founded in 1984 (isre.org).⁴ Since then, an interdisciplinary focus on emotion has become what William Reddy, author of *The Navigation of Feeling*, calls "a revolution" (34). Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley, in their collection of essays, *The Affective Turn*, trace the emphasis in the humanities and social sciences on the body and the emotions. They argue that this turn comes out of science studies, critical theory, post-structural feminism, and queer theory. William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns envision the history of emotions not as a specialized field but, "as a means of integrating the category of emotion into social, cultural, and political history, emulating the rise of gender as an analytical category since its early beginnings as "women's history" in the 1970s" (Plamper 237).

⁴ The extent to which this field is thriving can be measured by the number of international research societies that are specifically dedicated to the history of emotions. The 2007 launch of the Languages of Emotion at Freie Universität Berlin, a research center founded to investigate "the complex relationships between emotions and language, art, culture, and society," marked the institutionalization of the field. The following year, The Queen Mary Centre for the History of the Emotions at the University of London and the Max Planck Institute for Human Development Center for the History of Emotions were established. ISRE began publishing an interdisciplinary journal devoted to this topic, *Emotion Review*, in 2009. More recently, the ARC Center of Excellence for the History of Emotions, a collaboration across five Australia Universities, was founded in 2011, with the specific goal of using historical knowledge from Europe, 1100-1800, to understand the long history of emotional behaviors.

Paster's new historicist approach to humoral theory inspired a surge of scholarship in what she calls "the historical particularity of early modern emotional self-experience" (*Humoring the Body* 23). Her emphasis on the materially emotional body has deeply impacted a range of early modern scholars who apply her study of embodied experience to their work on diverse topics. For example, David Houston Wood explores how the connections between the humoral body and conceptions of time and temporality shape the concept of the self within early modern texts about health and emotion in *Time, Narrative, and Emotion in Early Modern England* (2009). Victoria Kahn, Neil Saccamano, and Daniela Coli theorize about the various ways early modern writers' changing perception of the body and gradual abandonment of humoral discourse lead to a new understanding of the self as a free, autonomous agent capable of political agency (*Politics and the Passions, 1500-1850*, 2006). Other recent work explores the extent to which the humoral body allows for human agency in altering and manipulating the very experience of embodiment. For example, Schoenfeldt argues in *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (1999) that diet and nutrition enabled physiological and affective self-fashioning. Mary Floyd Wilson's *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (2003) suggests an ethnic and regional self-fashioning, both putting "embodiment" into the hands of culturally informed social agents. Similarly, in the introduction to the 2012 special issue of *Shakespeare*, which focuses on "Shakespeare and the Culture of Emotion," each essay uses Paster's new critical emphasis on humoral theory as a starting point but, as Richard Meek claims, "this theory is only one way of approaching this topic, and needs to be brought into dialogue with other cultural frameworks and theoretical insights... Shakespeare's characters themselves contemplate

and comment upon their relationship with the culture of emotion that shaped them”

(279). T. Reiss and Paster are more skeptical about this concept of agency, reminding their readers that agency was possible only to a subset of very specific and privileged bodies or persons.⁵

As these works suggest, Paster’s claim that it is anachronistic to study any aspect of early modern identity, selfhood, emotion or embodiment without considering humoral theory has been widely accepted. However, other scholars are critical of the implication of what Paster describes as “historical phenomenology, a rubric that centers upon the ensouled body and the embodied soul” (*Shakespeare and Embodiment*). Richard Strier summarizes his concern:

It seems to me that the last thing that the Galenic physiological discourse is going to yield is a “phenomenology.”... To get a phenomenology, one needs to recreate the world of persons – the world of beliefs, hopes, fears, loves, hates, wishes, desires, etc. When an early modern person got angry, for instance, he or she did not say to her/himself: “Oh dear, my liver is heating up; my choleric humour is being activated, etc.” any more than we say (except under very special circumstances), “My blood pressure is rising; certain chemicals are raising their level in my brain, etc.” Instead, then, as now, people said, “That makes me mad, and I’m going to try to retaliate, or remember,” or something along those lines. (Paster, Strier, et al *Shakespeare and Embodiment*)

The next four chapters will demonstrate that these “very special circumstances” are not so rare as Strier implies; in fact, early modern dramatic characters talk about their organs and humors very frequently. Attempting to make sense of his overwhelming emotion

⁵ In *Mirages of the Self: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe* (2003), Reiss argues, that personhood was commonly believed to have been grounded in the material world. However, rather than emphasizing the materiality of the body, he argues that society, family, corporality, rationality, and the divine created, what he calls “circles.” These “circles” did not surround an individual who somehow fit into them, but they were the person, who was embedded in and acted upon them.

after being confronted by his father's ghost, the terrified Hamlet says to himself "Hold, hold, my heart,/ And you, my sinews, grow not instant old, But bear me stiffly up" (*Hamlet* 1.5.94-96). As he tries to manage the extreme emotion, he speaks directly to the organ that is considered the seat of his passions and to his buckling knees; he imagines the substance of his anguish in humoral terms. When Othello first sees his beloved wife after a long sea voyage, he describes his otherwise inexpressible joy in the language of the humors. "I cannot speak enough of this content; It stops me here," he says, pointing at his heart (*Othello* 2.1.225). Too soon after this joyful reunion, Desdemona is confused when her husband suddenly begins to act strangely. She wonders aloud what literal "thing" could have "puddled his clear spirit" (3.4.165).⁶ Desdemona distinguishes between that muddying thing and Othello's pure mind.

In these three cases, characters turn to the language of humoralism for very specific reasons: Hamlet, to maintain agency over his fear; Othello, to explain an experience that defies language; Desdemona, to distinguish between Othello (the man she loves) and his ugly, dangerous mood swing. Of course, as Strier argues, characters do not always describe their emotions in embodied terms. But why do these characters make the shift between subjective emotional language and material discourse? The next four chapters will address this question. In chapter two, I trace the moments that characters turn to humoral language in Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* and argue that Jonson's characters use humoral terms to express concern with bodily impulses that counter their rational desires. In the third chapter, I closely read Shakespeare's use of humoral

⁶ Paster uses Desdemona's question to exemplify the conflation of the literal and figurative meaning of the word "puddle." For her reading of Shakespeare's humoral language in this scene, see *Humoring the Body*, 62-65.

language in the *Henriad* noting when characters attempt to define themselves and others in distinctly material terms. In the fourth chapter, I look at moments of contrasting emotion in *King Lear*. In this play, Shakespeare places particular emphasis on bodily forces, which directly counter and occasionally overthrow reason. Finally, in chapter five, I discuss the dramatic event that must ultimately shut down all emotional narratives: the moment that the staged character literally dies of a broken heart.

Although Paster's work is foundational to my focus on humoralism, I want to challenge one of the implications of her central argument; she argues that Galenic humoralism, the dominant mode of understanding what emotions are and how they function in the early modern period, created a "distinct profile" and an emotional universe "that is dissimilar from ours" (*The Body Embarrassed* 3). In other words, since passions were imagined to function differently, they were *felt* differently. This claim defies a trend in psychology and the field of emotions, which stems from the work of Silvan S. Tomkins and his follower, Paul Ekman. Tomkins and Ekman assume that affective processes occur independently of intention or meaning. This paradigm had been dominant for over twenty years (Leys 437). In *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (1963), Tomkins interprets emotions as non-intentional bodily reactions; he describes a gap or "radical dichotomy between the 'real' causes of affect and the individual's own interpretation of these causes" (248). Ekman famously builds on this notion when claiming that the basic set of six emotions (anger, fear, disgust, surprise, happiness, and sadness) are genetic, not learned.⁷ Ekman's thesis is based on the assumption that facial

⁷ See Paul Ekman's essays, "Basic Emotions" and "Facial Expressions" in *The Handbook of Cognition*.

expressions can be innately recognized as being associated with particular emotions. Many social constructivists, who discuss the importance of ritual practices and collective performance in shaping emotions as learnt processes, have criticized Ekman (and the life scientists who he influenced) for being “universalist” and “presentist” (Carrera10). Notably, historian Barbara Rosenwein, who introduces the concept of “emotional communities” in her influential *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (2006), dismisses Ekman’s idea of a “real” emotion, which comes into being as solution to a problem in an evolutionary past. For example, Rosenwein claims that even “primal” emotions, like fear, cannot be appropriately studied outside of the context of cultural shaping:

Even if we accept this premise [that fear is nothing more than the real response to a threat](and I myself think it is much too simplistic), we still are confronted by the fact that only culture can tell us what a threat is, how we should handle and express our fear, and whether fear or some other emotion should dominate our social lives—or dominate at certain times but not at others. This “shaping” is what we see in “elaborate textual artifacts,” which, after all, are the products of a culture. (Rosenwein qtd. in Plamper 259)⁸

Like Rosenwein, Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wison, emphasize the importance of distinguishing between the early modern conceptualization of emotion and our own. In the introduction to the recent volume that they co-edited, *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, they claim, “taxonomies of emotions do not track or translate across cultures or historical periods” (4). For Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wison, the central differentiating feature is that of materiality. In *Humoring the Body*, Paster frequently suggests that

⁸ This is Rosenwein’s response to Jan Plamper’s question about why the “highly elaborate textual artifacts she reads should be subjected to the kind of historical reading she performs” (Plamper 258).

Shakespeare dramatizes emotional crisis in ways that still feel familiar, current and relevant; his characters' reactions to circumstances feel accessible; the plays can be staged as if they represent psychological dilemmas. However, to assume that a modern reader can relate to or fully understand the emotion of an early modern is a fantasy. This feeling of familiarity, as well as assumptions about our ability to relate to characters, causes modern readers to wrongly assume that an early modern emotional experience can be equated with a contemporary emotional experience. She asserts her belief that we moderns are far too imbedded in Cartesian dualistic thought to be able to imagine the early modern emotional body.

Many other scholars who have recently focused on the importance of understanding humoralism in early modern works conclude that our approach to the emotional body is so distant from the early moderns that it is irretrievable. Charles Taylor explains that although much modern philosophy has challenged this kind of dualism, it remains "a model of thought we easily fall into" (189). Schoenfeldt approvingly quotes Anthony Fletcher who similarly claims, "Despite some trends in recent philosophy and medicine, we are mostly still good Cartesians at heart" (10). Schoenfeldt argues:

Whereas our post-Cartesian ontology imagines psychological inwardness and physiological materialism as necessarily separate realms of existence, and thus renders corporeal language for emotion highly metaphorical, the Galenic regime of the humoral self that supplies these writers with much of their vocabulary of inwardness demanded the invasion of social and psychological realms by biological and environmental processes. (8)

Emphasizing that our current, post-Cartesian intellectual framework cannot avoid creating a mind/body binary, scholars argue that the binary prevents us from fully

comprehending the ostensibly unitary perception of the early modern body and the humoral conception of the self.

Troubling the Dualist Distinction

In the following chapters I do not want to make a universalizing claim or assert that “taxonomies of emotions” translate across the vastly different cultures and historical periods. Certainly, the inconsistent vocabulary provided by early modern Galenic humoralism and the evolving language of neurobiology are poles apart. These physiological approaches to the body are not the same; humors are not brain chemicals; passions are not neurotransmitters. However, for both the Galenic and the neuroscientific thinker, the internal workings of the body not only affect, but *are* one's emotional and psychological state. The way that Michael Schoenfeldt describes the distinctly early modern conceptualization of self as a fully imbricated “bodily condition, subjective state, and psychological character” (*Bodies and Selves* 10) can also apply to the proponents of the neuron doctrine, who assert that the mind is the brain, neuroscience is the science of the brain, and therefore, neuroscience alone will explain what can be explained about the mind (Gold and Stoljar 810). Both the pre-and-post-dualists can conclude that the change in their emotions is contingent on a change in their physical bodies. When asking, “why am I sad?” the Galenist can answer, “Because my liver produced too much bile,” while the neuroscientist can answer, “Because my brain is not producing and processing enough serotonin.”

Neither system can consistently explain the big questions: “Why does my black bile decrease as I write?”⁹; “Why does my body produce protein when my beloved enters the room?”¹⁰ However, according to both the paradigms of humors and brain chemistry, these complicated questions about emotion can only be explored by learning more about the material substances produced by and experienced within the body. In a New York Times op-ed piece responding to President Obama’s State of the Union Address (in which he announced a plan to invest in the study of neuroscience to “map the human brain”), David Eagleman discusses why this project is so important:

Imagine you were an alien catching sight of the Earth. Your species knows nothing about humans, let alone how to interpret the interactions of seven billion people in complex social networks. With no acquaintance with the nuances of human language or behavior, it proves impossible to decipher the secret idiom of neighborhoods and governments, the interplay of local and global culture, or the intertwining economies of nations. It just looks like pandemonium, a meaningless Babel. So it goes with the brain. We are the aliens in that landscape, and the brain is an even more complicated cipher. (1)

Even though mapping this outrageously complicated system is a tall (and very expensive) order, Eagleman claims that it is necessary because, “Our thoughts, desires, agonies, and ecstasies all emerge from the details of the neural landscape” (1). This is where Galenic humoralism and neuroscience meet: the answers to the questions about the nature of man are always found in the body.

⁹ In Burton's preface to the reader, his character Democritus Junior explains, "I write of melancholy by being busy to avoid melancholy."

¹⁰ Nerve growth factor (NGF), a protein important for the growth, maintenance, and survival of certain nerve cells is secreted when a person feels romantic love. See E. Emanuele, et al, “Raised Plasma NGF Levels Associated with Early-stage Romantic Love.”

It is important to recognize that, even as the neuroscientists' monistic approach to the mind/body relationship is quickly gaining ground, Cartesian dualism obviously remains foundational to our contemporary worldview. Even the neuroscientists who most aggressively assert "a successful theory of the mind will be solely neuroscientific" cannot entirely overcome dualism (Gold and Stoljar 809). As I will discuss at length in the next chapter, leading neuroscientists' regularly expose "a fundamental and irresolvable problem that emerges with any attempt at neural explanations of mental phenomena" (Mudrik and Maoz 39). However, a similar dualistic distinction between body and mind can be found in the language of pre-Cartesian early modern writing. Years before Descartes positions the conduit through which the soul and body interact in the pineal gland and categorizes body and mind as distinct and separate entities, a great deal of literature raised questions about the distinction between the mental and physical. Despite her claims that the early modern body/soul/mind was fully imbricated, Paster recognizes that Shakespeare and his contemporaries distinguish (in their own terms) between body and mind. She briefly mentions that early moderns were familiar with "dualistic habits of thought" and "preoccupied... with the relations of soul and body, reason and passion, spirit and flesh" (*Humoring the Body* 245). However, she only touches upon the existence of pre-Cartesian dualism briefly and the many critics she inspires ignore it altogether. Instead, new historicists, who focus on humoral theory, prioritize Paster's insightful critique of early modern scholars who "disembody human psychology... and entail a profound underestimation of the materialism so dominant in early modern discourses of soul and body and a misunderstanding of the bodily ecology of the passions" (*Humoring the Body* 245).

My argument depends upon the work of the many critics who have succeeded in shifting the focus to a humorally theorized materiality of emotion. However, I argue that neither the theory of the material humoral body nor the theory of the material chemical brain can provide a stable explanation for emotional experiences. Instead, both the early modern writers and my contemporaries weave together “dualistic habits of thought” and the monistic, materialistic language (of either Galenic humoralism or neurobiology) to narrate their emotions, desires and self-knowledge.

This introduction has argued that since the paradigms of humors and brain chemistry both associate emotion with material substance produced by and experienced within the body, the two approaches allow for similar questions to be asked about the relationship between the emotional body and the construction of identity. Both systems allow people to conclude that the change in their emotions occurs along with a change in their physical bodies. Rather than imply that self and body are categorically distinct and that people are responsible for actions initiated by one but not the other, the pre-Cartesian early modern defenders of Galen and the post-Cartesian “neurocentrics” struggle with the connection between embodied emotion and human agency.

In the following chapters, I explore how the understanding of emotion as bodily material (the Galenic humors, being moved by passions and animal spirits, or brain neurons, transmitting and reabsorbing neurotransmitters) affects the extent to which we believe we can govern our emotional responses. The first chapter will focus on the language of embodied emotion in Ben Jonson’s, *Every Man in his Humour*. Again and again, Jonson’s characters raise the question that neuroscientists are currently struggling with: “To what extent is my nature determined by my physiology?” I argue that as

Jonson's characters navigate the relationships with their passions and humors, they distinguish between their bodies and a dualist "self."

In chapters two and three, I study Shakespeare's approach to the "biological predetermination" question, by closely reading the *Henriad* and *King Lear*. In chapter two, I argue that Prince Hal, unlike many of the other characters he interacts with, is able to build and restructure his character, moods, emotions, and desires with calculated manipulation. My focus on Hal's humoral self-fashioning participates in a debate initiated by Paster and Schoenfeldt, who disagree about the extent to which the humoral discourse empowered early moderns to "produce the parameters of individual subjectivity" (Schoenfeldt 15). The third chapter will continue my discussion of the relationship between agency and bodily forces by focusing specifically on moments of high emotional conflict in *King Lear*. I discuss the moral and legal implications of these passions in the context of the play. Shakespeare asks "can one can be held responsible for his or her actions when a physiological causes their irrational behavior?" Then, I discuss how similar questions about accountability are being raised as neurobiological evidence is increasingly being introduced in the courtroom.

While the next three chapters explore how dramatic physical changes can impact the emotional body and individual identity, the last discusses how drastic changes in emotion and identity changes the physical body. I look at the most extreme cases of staged emotional materiality: the moments that characters die of heartbreak. In order to understand the notion of early modern heartbreak, the trope must be opened up and viewed as a literal, rather than figurative, breaking. By tracing the way that characters take control over their own breaking hearts through narrative in John Ford's *The Broken*

Heart and several of Shakespeare's plays, I conclude that the story the characters tell themselves about what the materials in their bodies are doing not only determines how they define what their emotions are, but also changes what the material of that emotion is able to do to the body. Finally, I discuss the fact that it is no longer considered hyperbolic to discuss dying of a broken heart.

CHAPTER TWO

IN AND OUT OF HUMOR: PHYSIOLOGY AND IDENTITY IN JONSON'S *EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR*

In the same *This American Life* program that I discussed in the introduction, one of the show's producers, Alex Blumberg, gives a 'testosterone testimonial,' describing a memory of hitting puberty and suddenly feeling sexual desire for the first time. He tells a story about being 15 and stumbling across Marilyn French's seminal feminist novel, *The Women's Room*, on his parents' bookshelf. He was struck by, and horrified with, the descriptions of the lustful men who objectified these powerful women. He quoted a particularly upsetting passage; French's narrator claims,

My feelings about men are the result of my experience. I have little sympathy for them. Like a Jew just released from Dachau, I watch the handsome, young Nazi soldier fall writhing to the ground with a bullet in his stomach. And I look briefly and walk on. I don't even need to shrug. I simply don't care. (French 198)

While reading this book, he had an unwanted, new experience. He looked at a girl in his homeroom class and was suddenly, unexpectedly, shockingly overcome with an all-consuming desire. He was disgusted with himself. He explains:

I felt like, oh my God. This is what, this is— I could see myself becoming the people that [French] was describing, the *men* she was describing. And it was really terrifying. My testosterone, and how it affects me, and how I react to it, I think about on a daily basis, all the time. It often feels like there's something in my body giving me instructions that I probably shouldn't follow. (Blumberg)

Although feminist literature is not so formative to most coming of age stories, many of us

have experienced some moment like the one Blumberg describes. Something happens to our bodies and we are transformed, sometimes so drastically that we do not even know ourselves. This experience opens questions about identity: What does it mean when a chemical change in my body makes me act in ways that I do not want to act, think thoughts that I do not want to think, desire things that I do not want to desire? Who/what is it that is doing the acting, thinking, desiring? How much control do I really have over my hormonal, chemical, changing, unpredictable body?

In Ben Jonson's humoral comedy *Every Man in His Humour*, Thorello, a wealthy, young merchant takes on these questions directly. He is shocked to experience a sudden change in his body shortly after his wedding. He and his new wife, Bianca, live with his wife's brother, Prospero, who brings many young gulls (wealthy simpletons) into his home. He suddenly becomes irrationally convinced that his wife will be seduced by one of these men. Worse than this fear is the fact that he is keenly aware how irrational he is being. He knows that he has no cause to suspect Bianca of infidelity. However, like the terrified teenage Blumberg, he can feel his body giving him directions that he does not want to follow. For Thorello jealousy is not an occurrence within his mind; it is a physical thing that he can feel move within his body. He describes it as:

A searching vapour, spreads itself
Confusedly through every sensitive part
Till not a thought or motion in the mind
Be free from the black poison of suspect. (1.4.200-203)¹

As he is materially overcome with all-encompassing jealousy, he experiences the terror of feeling an alien physical force change him from the inside. However, what upsets him

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all quotations will be taken from The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson's edition of the quarto text, *Every Man in His Humour* (1601).

more than this physiological experience is the awareness that the poison, not his free will, has dominion over all of his thoughts and actions. He questions the nature of this disturbing enslavement:

Ah, but what error is it, to know this,
And want the free election of the soul
In such extremes! Well, I will once more strive,
Even in despite of hell, myself to be,
And shake the fever off that thus shakes me. (1.4.204-208)

He laments his inability to establish a “free election of the soul” against the corrupting, external force of jealousy’s black poison. Yet, although jealousy is preventing him from making his own choices, he clearly has not given up his notion of an independent, abstracted “self” that exists apart from his subjected body. He imagines the emotion of jealousy as a vaporous material and claims, “in order to become myself again I must materially expel jealousy from my body.”

Striving To Be Myself: Distinguishing Between Body and Self

What does it mean to make Thorello and Blumberg’s claim: “my body is preventing me from being myself”? Peg O’Connor, a moral philosopher and regular contributor to the *New York Times* philosophy series, “The Stone,” argues that this question is becoming increasingly relevant in our current discussions about addiction. In “The Fallacy of the ‘Hijacked Brain,’” she claims that recent scientific studies on the biochemical responses of the brain appear to show that “the structure of the brain’s reward system combined with certain biochemical responses and certain environments” cause people to become addicted (1).

In such studies, and in reports of them to news media, the term “the hijacked brain” often appears, along with other language that emphasizes the addict’s lack of choice in the matter. Sometimes the pleasure-reward

system has been “commandeered.” Other times it “goes rogue.” These expressions are often accompanied by the conclusion that there are “addicted brains.” The word “hijacked” is especially evocative; people often have a visceral reaction to it. I imagine that this is precisely why this term is becoming more commonly used in connection with addiction. But it is important to be aware of the effects of such language on our understanding. (1)

Richard A. Friedman, a professor of clinical psychiatry and the director of the Psychopharmacology Clinic at the Weill Cornell Medical College, suggests that it is not just material substances (alcohol or drugs) that can “hijack” the brain, or stimulate the brain’s reward circuit in unwanted ways. Instead, emotional experiences can act like these substances. He describes a series of human experiments that attempt to understand when an emotional reward creates a physiological change. He concludes, “This [reward] circuit releases dopamine when stimulated, which, if it reaches a critical level, conveys a sense of pleasure.” When rewards are unanticipated there is a greater activation in the brain’s circuit than when a reward is delivered in a predictable fashion.

Since unpredictable rewards cause more dopamine release than predictable ones and more dopamine means more pleasure, one implication of this study is that people experience more pleasure with unpredictable rewards than with predictable ones — but they may not be consciously aware of this fact. (1)

For example, a brain will be more stimulated by a relationship with a person who is hot and cold —occasionally generous and generally withholding— than with a person who is consistently loving and supportive. However, the cogent, thinking, feeling person is not aware of the brain’s behavior. Friedman uses this lack of communication between the brain and the owner of the brain to explain one of the most infamous literary examples of irrational behavior: King Lear’s ill-treatment of Cordelia. Friedman explains, “Unfortunately for Cordelia, her father knew he could count on the love of his

devoted and constantly affectionate daughter. Compared with her scheming sisters, Cordelia was just not all that exciting—at least to Lear’s reward circuit” (2). However, Friedman does not go so far as to argue that this biological predetermining factor excuses Lear’s behavior. “None of this is to say that just because our reward circuits light up in the face of unanticipated rewards, that we are off the hook. Far from it. We use conscious knowledge to override our unhealthy or undesirable impulses all the time. Except for a few, limited circumstances, we are expected to be in charge of our brains” (2).

I am not arguing that Friedman is a particularly close reader of Shakespeare. (To imply that Lear is underwhelmed by Cordelia because he is so accustomed to her love ignores Cordelia’s deeply complicated silence and wrongly assumes that Lear was more surprised by Regan’s and Goneril’s declarations of love than by Cordelia’s “nothing.”) However, Friedman’s claim about Lear’s “reward circuit” is particularly relevant to the questions brought up by Thorello’s lament because Friedman draws a distinction between Lear and his unconscious urges. He claims that it is Lear’s physical brain and the material chemicals, which interact with one another inside of the organ, not Lear, who fails to be enthused by Cordelia’s love. By claiming that “we are expected to be in charge of our brains,” Friedman differentiates the self and the brain chemicals that produce affect, which Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley define as “pre-individual bodily forces, linked to autonomic responses, which augment or diminish a body’s capacity to act or engage with others” (316).

The metaphorical language that O’connor and Friedman use to describe the relationship between the brain and the conscious person, or the owner of the brain, is

the subject of neuroscientists Liad Mudrik and Uri Maoz's forthcoming "Me & My Brain: Exposing Neuroscience's Closet Dualism in Studies of Consciousness and Voluntary Action." They claim that when it comes to discussing "involuntary" feelings and bodily responses, most leading neuroscientists anthropomorphize the brain and differentiate the self from the body.

Sentences like "what your brain knows that you don't" (e.g., Frith, 2007, "When the brain knows but doesn't tell"; Gazzaniga, 2000, "The brain knows before you do"; Ornstein, 1992, "How the brain knows what you're doing before you do"), or even descriptions of the brain as a deceiving, manipulating entity that distorts the way we think of the world and our selves (Aamodt & Wang, 2008, "Can you trust your brain"; Fine, 2006, "How your brain distorts and deceives") appear front and center in some of the most prominent neuroscientific texts. (Mudrik and Maoz 5)

Mudrik and Maoz find this personification of the brain misleading because it creates two intentional subjects who are able to psychologically oppose one another. They refer to "this practice of personifying the brain as an additional subject on top of the conscious self" as the "Double-subject Fallacy" (6). In the conclusion of *Humoring the Body*, Gail Kern Paster discusses the dualism in current discussions of embodied language:

Even though cognitive science and psychopharmacology are encouraging us to relinquish our beliefs in such dualisms as mind and body, reason and passion, our language of self-reference and of emotion is relentlessly dualistic. We remain locked in a puzzle of lexical self-contradiction about these fundamental issues, even if we do not experience this self-contradiction as anything but the ordinary workings of semantic variation and overlap, the ordinary excesses of the signifying chain. (245)

Similarly, Mudrik and Maoz claim that these phrases are examples "of the lingering remnants of our intuitive dualistic dispositions, reminiscent of Descartes' dichotomy between body and soul which is now substituted by a dichotomy between my brain and me" (6). However, they insist that this fallacy is not merely a harmless metaphor or a

linguistic tool.² Instead, dualism is actually harmful to neuroscientific progress because it obscures a scientific discussion about the mind/brain relationship.

They assert that there is no “self” that opposes the material brain. Instead, the mind and the brain, the mental and the physical, are one substance that can be understood in many ways. This approach to the mind/body question is compatible with Baruch Spinoza’s metaphysics and Bertrand Russell’s “neutral monism” (Mudrik and Maoz 38). Russell claimed that “the whole duality of mind and matter... is a mistake” (15). The mental and the physical are the same intrinsic property. “They differ only in respect of arrangement and context” (Russell 15). As Russell explains, “In my mind, Caesar may call up Charlemagne, whereas in the physical world the two were widely sundered” (15). It is a mistake to assume that two distinct types of things (the idea of Caesar, and the man Caesar) are composed of two distinct substances (the mental and the physical). Instead, “there is only one kind of stuff out of which the world is made, and this stuff is called mental in one arrangement, physical in the other” (15).

As Mudrik and Maoz use neutral monism to theorize their understanding of a post-Cartesian contemporary worldview, Michael Witmore similarly employs monism as a guide for understanding the pre-Cartesian early modern worldview in his *Shakespearean Metaphysics*. He uses three philosophers as guides for his readings of three of Shakespeare’s plays: Baruch Spinoza, Alfred North Whitehead, and Henri Bergson.

² Mudrik and Maoz analyze the possible metaphorical meaning of the phrase “the brain decides to act before we do,” and conclude that “While the alleged non-literal meaning of “decide” might make sense for each part of the sentence separately, their conjuncture as a whole is clearly confused. It seems to entail that there are two different neural networks whose activation leads to performing one and the same action, one in the brain and the other in the subject. As much as it is clear that there are no networks of the brain as opposed to networks of the subject, it should also be clear that there are no decisions of the brain that are dissociated from decisions of the subject” (33).

Spinoza, the seventeenth century father of modern dual aspect theory, refuted Descartes's famous division of immaterial minds and physical bodies and originated the notion that there exists only one substance with both mental and physical attributes. More than 250 years after Spinoza's death, Whitehead established the modern iteration of "process philosophy" which challenges the notion that the mind is unrelated to the world of nature and argues that "there is urgency in coming to see the world as a web of interrelated processes of which we are integral parts, so that all of our choices and actions have consequences for the world around us" (Mesle 9). Whitehead's contemporary, Henri Bergson, developed a concept of multiplicity, which attempts to unify heterogeneity and continuity.

Witmore admits that this is a "historically and geographically diffuse" trio (11). However, he argues that these thinkers are "the ideal guides" for a study of Shakespeare's worldview because,

Like the party of Italians who emerge from the sea in *The Tempest* only to marvel at the music that wafts across its shores, Whitehead, Bergson and Spinoza are fascinated by the ways in which truly distinctive forms of being fail to be bonded within the edges of a physical body, taking shape rather in an ensemble of actions, like the mobile shine of a school of fish turning in the water. Yet these thinkers are also interested in the reality and touch of the physical world in which we live, its pressing claims on our being and consciousness, something Shakespeare too never loses sight of in his theatrical practice (2).

Specifically, Witmore argues that Shakespeare shares the philosopher's investment in a metaphysical tradition that opposes Cartesian dualism. He claims that Shakespeare is a "dramaturgical monist," a term he invents to suggest "a parallel between Spinoza's commitment to a one-substance model of being and Shakespeare's tendency... to view the elements of theatrical reality as interconnected features of a single whole— aspects of

what we might call the substance of theatrical reality” (25).

Although Witmore focuses specifically on Shakespeare’s theory of the theater and Paster focuses more generally on the early modern understanding of the mind/body problem, his notion of “dramaturgical monism” is compatible with her notion of “affective immanence.” Paster refers to the early modern notion of mind-body monism when she argues that “early modern bodies have an affective immanence and ability supported rather than contradicted by humoral theory” (22). As I discussed in the introduction, critics including Schoenfeldt, Wood, Neely, Maus, and Floyd-Wilson agree that early moderns had a difficult time conceiving of the immaterial and that “bodily condition, subjective state, and psychological character [were] fully imbricated” (Schoenfeldt 1). Mudrik and Maoz argue that the neuroscientific community claims to understand the body as the pre-Cartesians did: as an integrated psychophysiological substance. However, Mudrik and Maoz reveal that moving away from the dualist framework is proving to be more difficult than the self-proclaimed materialist neuroscientists are willing to admit.

Mudrik and Maoz find neutral monism a particularly useful framework because it allows for an experience to be discussed as a mental event from the first-person perspective and as a neural mechanism from the third-person perspective. “However, it does not make any sense to confuse the two types of predicates” (38). They claim that neuroscientists commit “Double-subject Fallacy,” not when they use multiple predicates, but when they confuse those predicates. They use Bernard Baars’s description of the neuropathological condition known as “blindsight” as an example:

If we hold a pair of scissors before the eyes of blindsight patients, they

would claim not to see anything, yet they might be able to reach for the scissors with thumb and forefinger extended to insert into the scissor loops. Thus we can verify that some part of the visual brain knows about the scissors, though the patient disclaims any direct perceptual knowledge. There is a dissociation between what the brain knows and what the patient claims to experience. (Baars quoted in Mudrik and Maoz, 9)

Mudrik and Maoz argue that it is reasonable to describe “a person both relying on her conscious state (e.g., saying that she consciously wanted to act), and on her brain state (e.g., saying that at that point in time, a readiness potential was already present” (38). However, Baars ascribes one first-person predicate to the person who does not know that there are scissors in front of her, and another, opposing first-person predicate to her brain that does know of the scissors. Despite an explicit commitment shared by most neuroscientists to monism, their writings reveal implicit dualism regarding the relationship between the brain and its owner, the body and the mind, the material and the mental.

I find Mudrik and Maoz’s “Double-subject Fallacy” compelling because it exposes how contradictions, mixed metaphors, and imprecise language reveal the difficulties in transitioning from a dualistic to a monist worldview. The neuroscientists use of language exposes a complexity that is rarely discussed: even the most proclaimed materialists do not know how to think of themselves or even communicate the notion of “self” in utterly materialistic terms. Therefore “another entity with an unclear nature comes into play: a mysterious “I” that can interact with its brain in various ways” (Mudrik and Maoz 6).³

³ For more examples of the extent to which Cartesian dualism is central to contemporary ways of ordering thought, see Paul Bloom’s *Descartes’ Baby* (2005). Bloom argues that even very young children are understood to distinguish bodies from souls.

Jonson's "Humour"

While Jonson was writing his humoral comedies, the opposite type of shift was occurring in early modern Europe. Although there was growing skepticism amongst European medical communities towards Galenic humoralism by the time the Lord Chamberlain's Men performed *Every Man in His Humour* in 1598, Galen's basic assumptions persisted widely. The popular notion of human personality based on the four humors was foundational to Jonson's humoral comedy. As I will explain, in most contemporary criticism, Jonson is portrayed as the quintessential early modern materialist. However, just as the post-Cartesian neuroscientists slip into dualist language, the pre-Cartesian, materialist Jonson also slips in and out of language, which reveals that he is very troubled by the distinction between mind and body. His characters express concern with bodily impulses that counter their rational desires. In navigating their relationships with their materially changing bodies, Jonson's characters distinguish between their bodies and that same, dualist "entity with an unclear nature" with which the neuroscientist struggle. Jonson's characters are much more concerned about this distinction than critics like Paster and Schoenfeldt suggest.

When Jonson began writing *Every Man in His Humour*, the humoral comedy genre was well established on the early modern stage. The strategy of creating comic humoral characters dates back to antiquity, and "theater historians tend to credit the invention of humors comedy [in Renaissance England] to Chapman, whose popular play *An Humorous Days Myrth* was first performed in May 1597" (Scott-Warren 75). The two most popular theatrical companies in London, the Lord Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, "rivaled each other in the production of humors plays" (Scott-

Warren 75). Many of the most prolific early modern dramatists including Shakespeare, Marston, Fletcher, and Shirley wrote comedies in which “the action depends primarily on humours, because it is the humours themselves, in all their various pathologies, trivial or profound, that provoke it. Without them the action could not occur” (Ostovich 13).

Every character is a recognizable type. The characters’ revelations of their humoral states (as well as the entire notion of humoralism) are the butt of the jokes.

Every Man In His Humour was Jonson’s earliest commercially successful play (Bloom 16). Part of its success may have been due to his adherence to the expectations of humoral comedy. However, Robert Miola claims that in *Every Man In His Humour*, “Jonson is up to something new” (12). Miola distinguishes the “humours” that Jonson references from those of the traditional Galenic discourse:

This kind of humours characterization differs fundamentally from the simple presentation of sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric or melancholic from the understanding character.... Instead, it develops from the understanding of humour popular at the turn of the century, humour as ‘affection, caprice, or whim’ (OED II.6a, b). (13)

Jonson is very interested in exploring the multiple, overlapping, and stylish uses of the word “humour.” James D. Redwine convincingly demonstrates that “the place to begin an investigation of Jonson’s theory of humours is neither the work of Hippocrates nor the work of Galen,” but the induction to *Every Man Out of His Humour*, Jonson’s thematic sequel to *Every Man In His Humour* (316). In this induction, Jonson’s character Asper, a playwright who is frequently read as Jonson’s self-portrait, famously defines the term “humour” (Barton 62).

Why, humour (as’ tis, ens) we thus define it
To be a quality of air or water,
And in itself holds these two properties,

Moisture, and fluxure. As, for demonstration: Pour
 water on this floor, 'twill wet and run; Likewise, the
 air, forced through a horn or trumpet, Flows
 instantly away and leaves behind
 A kind of dew. And hence we do conclude
 That what soe're hath fluxure and humidity,
 As wanting power to contain itself,
 Is humour. So in every human body,
 The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
 By reason that they flow continually
 In some one part and are not continent,
 Receive the name of humours. Now, thus far
 It may by metaphor apply itself
 Unto the general disposition,
 As when some one peculiar quality Doth
 so possess a man that it doth draw All his
 affects, his spirits, and his powers, In their
 confluxions all to run one way.
 This may be truly said to be a humour. (Induction, 86-107)

Asper begins his complicated definition of the humors by didactically laying out the traditional Galenic definition of the four humors. Humors are liquid or vaporous moving, changing substances that exist in the body. As Jonson's contemporary medical theorists often do, Asper describes the psychological component of two (choler and melancholy) and the material components of the other two (phlegm and blood). He goes on to further explain the foundational Galenist belief: an imbalance of one of the four humors impacts the affects (or passions) and spirits (or the animating forces of the body). Then, Asper discusses a different meaning of humor. Rather than being just a bodily substance, he describes humor as "a metaphor" for a disposition. At this point, he personifies the humor, giving it an agency of its own; he explains that the imbalanced man's "powers" are "drawn" by the dominant humor.

Miola argues that Jonson's use of this term "insistently and self-consciously transforms humors physiology into a method of characterization and a structural

principal, thus creating a drama not so much of interaction as of display” (13). In other words, he suggests that when he writes a humoral comic character, Jonson is not necessarily interested in creating a fully developed person who is animated by a humor and interacts with other humoral people. Instead, Jonson’s characters simply are the characterization of the humors. The emphasis of the comedy is not in their interactions and relationship so much as it is in the exposure and display of their humors or dominant affections, vices, or follies. Miola’s analysis summarizes the dominant critical approach to Jonson’s humoral characters. They are traditionally read as “flat, inflexible, predictably ridiculous... [They follow] Aristotle’s requirements [in *Poetics*] to harmottonta, ‘appropriateness to expectation’; to homoion, ‘likeness to traditional characters’; to homalon, ‘consistency in representation’” (Miola 12).

Lawrence Danson argues that Jonson’s comic characters are so fully imbricated in their humoral states that when their humors are exposed, they become entirely empty.

Therefore, he reads the endings of most of Jonson’s comedies as tragic:

It seems to me, however, that the "darkest" Shakespearean comedy (Troilus and Cressida problematically apart) is not as dark at the moment of discovery as is, for instance, Bartholomew Fair at the uproarious moment when Jonson's spokespuppet throws up his skirts to reveal himself in the purity of his essential nothingness. Brainworm, Volpone, Face and Subtle, Bartholomew Cokes, Epicoene: each of them, like the puppet, is vivid as a character but weirdly insubstantial as a self. (Danson 189)

He claims that the character’s fail to have moments of “self-discovery” because they have no selves to discover. James Hirsh similarly argues that *Volpone* presents no reformations because its world is “populated by incurably knavish or naive fools” (13). Jason Scott-Warren has an even darker interpretation of the dishumouring scenes, which expose,

display, and mock the characters' humorally imbalanced bodies. He argues that they "can turn a play into a low form of entertainment, the equal of a freak-show, or a bearbaiting" (79).

Danson and Hirsh's argument that there can be no Jonson character "out-of-humour" is a commonly held critical assumption. Miola reaches the same conclusion in his discussion of the last scene of *Every Man in His Humour*:

Despite Clement's assumption of a judicial voice and control over the unmistakable motions of closure, the final scene does not present unambivalent dishumouring... As in classical comedy, dishumouring in Jonson takes the form of exposure rather than reformation. And despite the various treefalls, the displayed humours, though stunted for the moment, are still crecive and green. Every man in his humour still. (Miola 64)

According to Miola, these characters are their humoral states.

Most critics discuss Jonson in order to make an argument for how much more complex the Shakespearian characters are by contrast. In Kenneth Jackson's compelling reading of *Hamlet*, Polonius becomes the stand-in for the Jonsonian character and Hamlet becomes the stand-in for the Shakespearian character.

Shakespeare begins Act Two with a duel, as it were, between one character who believes wholeheartedly, even presumptuously, that he can master the "truth" of someone through careful observation of superficial mannerisms, the assumption, again, of the Jonsonian "humor" plays, and one person who refuses to have his truth known by these gestures and, moreover, displays a notable irritation with such mannerisms. (Jackson 88)

Katherine Maus reaches a similar conclusion about Jonson's characters, claiming that their apparent "flatness" "may be due to this impossibility of his possessing hidden depths, some implied level of experience from which the audience is excluded" (27).

Certainly, Shakespeare and Jonson are doing very different things with their comedies. As I'll explain in the following chapters, Shakespeare approaches questions

about the complicated identities of his characters much more explicitly than Jonson does. However, I want to challenge this reading of Jonson's humoral characters. For Jonson's characters, "truths" are not exposed by a "careful observation of superficial mannerisms." Instead, Jonson challenges the notion that it is ever possible to entirely know the full "truth" of the character. The traditional reading of his characters as allegorical folly or as predictable and definable metaphors for specific age-old vices ignores the deeply problematic relationships that these characters have with their own humors. Certainly, Thorello is overcome by jealousy, but as he clearly explains, he is anxious and frightened because he believes that he has a self that is distinct from his humor. If he does not want to allow his humor to define him, how can it? The comic tone, as well as the fact the Jonson states in the prologue of his revised folio that the purpose of his play is to "sport with human follies," often masks the very real and terrifying concerns that the characters express upon realizing that they cannot control their own humoral bodies. Jonson's interest in exploring the complicated relationship between the mind and the body is an under-theorized aspect of his work. Exploring how Jonson's characters contradict themselves—and one another—as they attempt to reach conclusions about how their notion of self can be compatible with their bodily experiences is particularly relevant in this current cultural moment as we renegotiate our own dualist distinctions in the wake of neuroscience.

(Im)perfect and Divine Temper: The Bodies of Jonson's Characters

Before I return to the complicated, nuanced, and upsetting mind/body relationship that Thorello explores, I will begin with one of Jonson's far less troubled descriptions of a humoral body to show that even the perfectly balanced humoral body raises questions

about the mind/body relationship.

In *Cynthia's Revels* Mercury describes Criticus, the most perfect human specimen he knows to exist. To prove that Criticus is the ideal man, he specifically focuses on describing the humoral makeup of his body:

A creature of a most perfect and divine temper; one, in whom the humours and elements are peaceably met, without emulation of precedency; he is neither too fantastically melancholy, too slowly phlegmatic, too lightly sanguine, or too rashly choleric, but in all so composed and ordered as it is clear Nature went about some full work; she did more than make a man when she made him.
(2.3.93-97)

Interestingly, Mercury praises Nature for balancing the humors in Crites body, not Crites for taking any agency over his “divine temper.” Crites *is* his perfect body and providential forces have predetermined what his body is. In fact, nature balanced his humors so well that Mercury has doubts about whether Crites is even a man. Instead, he is positioned as some kind of Platonic ideal. His lack of humoral imbalance makes him inappropriate for the world of Jonson’s stage where all the humoral characters struggle with their complex, deeply imperfect humoral bodies.

In the world of *Every Man in His Humour*, there are no perfect, nature-sculpted bodies. Instead, the primary drama revolves around the characters’ struggles with their own humors and the humoral states of their loved ones. The play opens with Lorenzo Senior lamenting about the humoral state of his son, Lorenzo Junior. Lorenzo Senior is concerned that his son has been wasting his time with, what he considers to be, frivolous study. Lorenzo Junior has become the melancholic scholar, locked away from the world. While Lorenzo Junior believes that he has become, like the speaker of Milton’s “Il Penseroso,” the true, scholarly melancholic who worships at the feet of poetry, viewing

her “in her glorious ornaments,/ Attired in the majesty of art,/ Set high in spirit with the precious taste/ Of sweet philosophy” (5.3.272-275), his friend, Prospero, has a different interpretation of this melancholic solitude. He mocks Lorenzo Junior: “I doubt Apollo hath got thee to be his inglen” (1.1.130). However, both Lorenzo Senior and Prospero believe that there is more to Lorenzo Junior than his current dominant humoral characteristic. Prospero knows this because his friend visits him, putting aside both his books and his melancholic disposition. Lorenzo Senior is confident that his son can change because he once overcame a similar humoral imbalance himself. He explains:

Myself was once a student and, indeed,
Fed with the self-same humor he is now,
Dreaming on naught but idle poetry.
But since, experience hath awaked my spirits,
And reason taught them how to comprehend
The sovereign use of study. (1.1.16-21)

As Lorenzo Senior aged, two distinct forces, experience and reason, changed the animation (the literal movement) of “his affects, his spirits, and his powers.” Lorenzo Senior retains a faith in his son’s ability to manage the internal workings of his humoral body through acts of will. However, he claims that the only way to achieve this self-control is through an intentional submission to reason. He later explains that his primary concern is his son’s unwillingness to do so:

My labouring spirit, being late oppressed
With my son’s folly, can embrace no rest
Till it hath plotted by advice and skill
How to reduce him from affected will
To reason’s manage. (2.2.1-5)

Lorenzo Senior laments that his spirit is being physically restrained by his concern about his son. Lorenzo Senior’s comment about moving his son from affected will to reason’s

manage is a paraphrase of Sidney's famous dictum "our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it" (Sidney 66). Lorenzo divides his son into three distinct categories: the wit/reason that allows him to know perfection, the affected/infected will that prevents him from achieving that perfection and the active agent doing the knowing/failing. He imagines that his son has an abstracted self that is distinct from the helpful forces of reason and the dangerous forces of affection.

Lorenzo Senior goes on to pontificate upon the relationship between passion and reason. He admires "nature's art, who when she did inspire/ This heat of life, placed reason as king/ Here in the head to have the marshalling/ Of our affections" (2.2.12-15). This analogy, which positions reason as the singular monarch and the passions/affections as distinct, numerous, quarrelsome, individual members of the commonwealth, is frequently used in early modern passion discourse. For example, Jean-François Senault similarly insists that people have a moral imperative to train their passions. The title page of the Earl of Monmouth's 1649 translation of Senault's *The Use of the Passions* depicts Reason as an austere Goddess standing in dominion over images representing enslaved affections. Characters depicting joy, sorrow, choler, hope, boldness, fear, despair, love, eschewing, hatred, and desire are chained at the ankle and linked together. Reason, on her throne holds the chains in one fist, a scepter in her other. Similarly, Tommaso Buoni, Thomas Wright, and Robert Burton all conceptualize passions, affections, desires, and urges as biological responses that are determined by the humoral elements. However, none of these writers (not even Burton who frequently celebrates men who allow themselves to indulge in their impulses) allow for man to use their natural humor as an

excuse for poor behavior. Reason, the knowing, moral, immaterial essence, should guide the passions. In his “Cure for Melancholy” chapter, Burton states,

Against those other passions and affections, there is no better remedy than as mariners when they go to sea, provide all things necessary to resist a tempest:... to oppose sufferance to labour, patience to reproach, bounty to covetousness, fortitude to pusillanimity, meakness to anger, humility to pride; to examine ourselves for what cause we are so much disquieted... then either to pacifie ourselves by reason, to divert by some other object, contrary to passion or premeditation (64).

Ultimately, man’s body makes reason difficult, but man still has the ability and the moral imperative to use reason to control these passions.

Lorenzo uses very similar language to describe the nature of the passions. They are,

like proud arch-traitors that rebel
Against their sovereign, practise to expel
Their liege lord, Reason, and not shame to tread
Upon his holy and anointed head. (2.2.23-26)

He then expands the analogy to include the mind, comparing it to the kingdom in which these distinct forces battle.

But as that land or nation best doth thrive
Which to smooth-fronted peace is most proclive,
So doth that mind, whose fair affections, ranged
By Reason’s rules, stand constant and unchanged. (2.2.27-30)⁴

Lorenzo asserts that when the bodily, material forces of affection are ruled by the immaterial, disembodied reason, the mind is stable. He positions the affections as forces that belong to the body and reason as an external, authoritative force. He asks why the abstracted “we” obey reason if reason is too weak to control our affections/passions: “Or

⁴ Miola glosses this as “Just as that land thrives best which is peaceful, so does that mind thrive best which is ordered by reason” (n. 129). However, Lorenzo’s claim is somewhat more complicated than the paraphrase suggests.

why are we obsequious to his law,/ If he want spirit our affects to awe?" (2.2.33-34).

Again, Lorenzo presents a triadic relationship between the reason (personified as a male authority figure), the passions (which are of and belong to the body), and the abstracted agent (the owner of the body) which can either obey or disobey the rules of reason.

Lorenzo Senior concludes his aside with a hypothetical question about why people ought to follow the rules of reason since reason is not even strong enough to contain passion. He answers it by mocking himself for the futility of even raising such a question: "Oh, no, I argue weakly" (2.2.35). Finally, he concludes, "[reason] is strong,/ Albeit my son have done him too much wrong" (2.2.35-36). His son—not his son's passions or mind, but the abstracted agent who has free will—is at fault for refusing to submit to reason's powers.

Despite his confidence that men are free to shape and change their own dispositions, Lorenzo Senior proves to be unsuccessful in managing his own. In the last act, Doctor Clement challenges Lorenzo Senior to do away with the melancholic humor that has dominated him throughout the play. Doctor Clement encourages Lorenzo Senior to let go of his distrust and overbearing concern for his son and lays out a compelling case about why his anxieties are unreasonable. He tells him, "Signor Lorenzo, God's pity, man, be merry, be merry, leave these dumps" (3.3.105). Lorenzo Senior replies,

Troth would I could, sir; but enforcèd mirth,
In my weak judgment, has no happy birth.
The mind being once prisoner unto cares,
The more it dreams on joy, the worse it fares. (3.3.107-110)

Here, Lorenzo Senior contradicts his earlier claims about the man's freedom to choose reason or folly. Now, he describes his mind as a prisoner and "care" as a jailer. Therefore,

the affections of his mind (which are manifest as neurosis about his son) are not controlled by reason.

He takes no action to attempt to remedy this imbalance. Instead, he justifies his surly stubbornness by condemning “forced mirth.” He tells Doctor Clement,

A smiling look is to a heavy soul,
As a gilt bias to leaden bowl,
Which in itself appears most vile, being spent
To no true use, but only for ostent. (3.3.125-134)⁵

He claims to despise false appearances. For Doctor Clement, moods, affections, and humors are like so many different hats, “soon put on, and as soon put off” (2.3.135). For Lorenzo Senior, it is useless to have a mood or affection that he does not feel. His stubborn defense of his heavy mood interestingly contradicts his earlier lofty claims about man’s ability to choose to follow reason despite even the strongest forces of “affection.”

His own stubbornness does not prevent him from condemning others who are unwilling to change their affections and moods. Throughout the play, Lorenzo Senior proselytizes his faith that the tempers of the spirits are changed by activity. A contemporary reader may understand him as a proponent of behavioral rather than cognitive therapy. When Lorenzo Senior comes upon Musco disguised as a beggar soldier he lambasts him for not living up to the full potential of his body and tells him that his idleness will hurt the motion of his spirits:

But men of your condition feed on sloth,
As does the scarab⁶

⁵ Ostentation

⁶ According to the *OED*, in early use, scarab can refer to a beetle of any kind including the “scarabæid beetle, *Ateuchus sacer*, revered by the ancient Egyptians.” Therefore,

on the dung she breeds in,
 Not caring how the temper of your spirits
 Is eaten with the rust of idleness. (2.2.69-72)

Lorenzo Senior believes that the beggar soldier (who is really the disguised Musco) has a body that is capable of producing a better spirit. According to Lorenzo Senior, bodies should match the mind:

Believe me, I am rapt with admiration
 To think a man of thy exterior presence
 Should, in the constitution of the mind,
 Be so degenerate, infirm, and base. (2.2.56-59)

He believes that one's internal state should be reflected in their looks; therefore, Lorenzo Senior is upset that the body can't always be trusted.

In this scene, it is particularly difficult to discern whether Jonson believes that an external body can be indicative of an internal truth. First of all, Musco is disguising his body. The audience knows that Musco is capable of much more than he is pretending to be. Furthermore, most of the other characters' external bodies do give others reliable clues about their internal humoral states. For example, the choleric Giuliano, (who is always either in the midst of an enraged fight or about to be) externally looks like what he internally is. Matheo describes his appearance to Prospero: "An there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by Phoebus" (2.3.9-10). Prospero replies, "Troth, nor I. He is of a rustical cut — I know not how" (2.3.14). Not only is his behavior choleric, but he looks "rustical" or boorish and unsophisticated (OED def 4a). His "rustical cut" may also refer to his "rust" colored face suggesting that an

Lorenzo Senior could refer to either the common dung beetle or a rare, beautiful insect which also breeds in dung. This double meaning could complicate Jonson's message about the relationship between external appearance and inner truth. However, Jonson edits this ambiguity out of the revised folio by replacing "scarab" with "snake."

excess of blood, which causes him to appear flushed, causes his humoral imbalance of choler.

Gallbladders and Boiling Blood

Both Giuliano and the characters whom he meets consistently explain his behavior by referencing his choleric humor, Hesperida tells him “Brother, indeed, you are too violent,/ Too sudden in your courses” (3.4.149-150). Jonson gives the audience many examples of Giuliano’s rash choleric outbursts. When Giuliano hears about his brother’s increasingly wasteful lifestyle, he claims that he will cut off his own ear before giving his brother another penny (1.4.60). When Thorello asks him to be patient, he declares “‘Sblood, he mads me! I could eat my very flesh for anger” (1.4.62-63). When Giuliano attempts to beat Prospero during an argument, Prospero excuses his brother’s violent behavior by explaining, “Come let’s go. This is one of my brother’s ancient humours, this” (3.4.167). Thorello tries to talk Giuliano down after Bobadilla insults Giuliano by calling him a Scavenger. Thorello restrains him and prevents the fight.

But, brother, let your apprehension then
Run in an easy current, not transported
With heady rashness or devouring choler,
And rather carry a persuading spirit,
Whose powers will pierce more gently and allure
Th’imperfect thoughts you labor to reclaim
To a more sudden and resolved assent. (1.4.128-134)

Thorello recognizes the telltale signs of Giuliano’s choler and in Galenic terms discusses the choler as a devouring thing that can transport apprehension.⁷ By defining it in material terms, Thorello offers an actual plan to try to stop it. However, Jonson has

⁷ Miola cites Timothy Bright’s *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586) as a source for Thorello’s description. Similar passages, describing apprehension as a devouring choler appear in Levinus Lemnius’ *The Touchstone of Complexions* (1581).

already made it clear that despite Thorello's knowledge about the humoral body and his logical urging of Giuliano to control his, Thorello is ultimately unable to follow his own advice.

Giuliano, as much as anyone, is aware of his own humoral imbalance. When he becomes infuriated with the gull Matheo and his ridiculous poetry, he communicates his anger using Galenic language to describe the relationship between the organs of his body and his anger "Oh, here's no foppery! 'Sblood, it frets me to the gall to think" (3.4.31).⁸

After he storms out of the room, Prospero tosses his hands in the air, recognizing the futility of trying to change his choleric brother. He tells his companions, "Oh, ay, it is his condition" (3.4.32).

At the end of the play Giuliano offers Prospero the closest thing to an apology that he is able to manage:

Well, brother Prospero, by this good light that shines here, I am loath to kindle fresh coals, but, an you had come in my walk within these last two hours, I had given you that you should not have clawn off again in haste. By Jesus, I had done it; I am the arrant'st rogue that ever breathed else! But now, beshrew my heart if I bear you any malice in the earth. (5.3.322-326)

In this moment of "good light," Giuliano's humor is not in control of his actions. He is able to tell Prospero that he cares for him and attempts to make peace. However, in the same breath, he threatens his brother, stating the fact that he would have beaten him severely if he had seen him earlier. Being conscious of his humoral imbalance does not empower him to control it.

Like Giuliano, Lorenzo Junior's cousin, Stephano, is naturally choleric. The

⁸ According to Gallen, the gallbladder was the organ that produced choler.

audience immediately knows this because, in the first scene, Lorenzo Senior has to restrain him from beating Prospero's messenger as a result of a casual misunderstanding. However, unlike Giuliano, he has no awareness of his own humoral imbalance. He never indicates that he is conscious of or has regrets about his choler. Yet, even though he is blissfully unaware of the humors that control him (which are so obvious to everyone else), he is unsatisfied with his current humoral state. Rather than attempting to correct his choleric imbalance, he laments that he lacks the fashionable imbalance of melancholy. He believes that he can make himself "more gentlemanly" if he can become a melancholic.⁹ Much to Lorenzo Junior and Prospero's delight, Stephano attempts to affect this humor. The two secretly mock him as he introduces himself by claiming "I am somewhat melancholy" and by asking for a stool (2.3.74). The folio clarifies the reason that he asks for the stool; he asks, "have you a stool there to be melancholy upon?" Stephano goes so far as to pull Lorenzo Junior aside and self-consciously ask, "Cousin, is it well? Am I melancholy enough?" (2.3.99).

Lorenzo Junior and Prospero share laughs with the audience, watching Stephano make a fool of himself. The stakes feel low since neither Lorenzo Senior nor Stephano seem to be irreparably harmed by Lorenzo Junior and Prospero's mockery nor by their own lack of humoral agency. However, Thorello's failed attempts to alter his relationship with his humoral body are much more disturbing and reveal a deeper level of anxiety about free will, abstracted selfhood, and biological predetermination.

⁹ Michael MacDonald writes about the "social prestige of melancholy" in detail in *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (151).

“In the Heat of Passion”: Thorello’s Dualistic Destiny

The jealous Thorello is one of the most conventional humoral characters in one of Jonson’s most conventional humoral comedies. However, as we have already seen, Thorello regularly rejects the notion that he is his jealousy. Instead, like the neuroscientists whom O’connor criticizes, Thorello insists that his mind has been hijacked; his true self is overcome by bodily disease. Jonson introduces Thorello as he approaches Giuliano to ask him to intervene and get his half-brother, Prospero, to change his ways. When Giuliano asks him why he does not just confront Prospero himself, Thorello explains his theory of human behavior:

...if I should speak,
 He would be ready in the heat of passion
 To fill the ears of his familiars
 With oft reporting to them what disgrace
 And gross disparagement I had proposed him;
 And then would they straight back him in opinion,
 Make some loose comment upon every word,
 And out of their distracted fantasies
 Contrive some slander that should dwell with me. (1.4.78-86)

The notion that other men’s “distracted fantasies” could cause a scandal was a commonly discussed early modern anxiety. Robert Burton warns that when the imaginative faculty becomes diseased, people “are so much affected, that with the very strength of imagination, fear, and the devil’s craft, they pull those misfortunes they suspect, upon their own heads, and that which they fear, shall come upon them” (364). However, Thorello’s assumption about how Prospero will behave if he confronts him is doubly ironic. First, Thorello concludes that a confronted Prospero will be “in the heat of passion” and that this passion will cause Prospero to say cruel things about him behind his back. However, by sharing this hypothetical with Giuliano, Thorello is doing exactly

what he fears Prospero will do, “filling the ears of his familiars with disgrace.” Next, Thorello prematurely accuses Prospero and the other gulls of creating a slander out of “distracted fantasies,” or, in other words, of imagining a scandal and making up false rumors. Of course, it is actually Thorello whose diseased imagination is giving him images of the gulls seducing Bianca and Thorello who does the slandering.

For Thorello, every human action can be predicted and explained as a result of physiology. In his first soliloquy, Thorello explains that his understanding of the humoral body justifies his fear of being cuckolded. His house is full of “wonton gallants and young revelers” and he knows that “strong motives muster and make head/ Against [his wife’s] single peace” (1.4.154-155). The “strong motives” that he imagines are not Bianca’s desire to hurt him or any moral failing on her part. Instead he is concerned about a potential humoral alteration in his wife’s vulnerable body. He explains these fears about Bianca’s changing body:

No, no, beware
When mutual pleasure sways the appetite,
And spirits of one kind and quality
Do meet to parley in the pride of blood (1.4.155-158).

Of course, his word choice references the actual act of intercourse (Miola notes the play on the word “spirit” which can be a slang for semen). However, he is primarily concerned with the motion of the animal spirits, which animate her body. According to Galenic theory, when one is “moved” by passion, one does not merely feel moved. Instead, the physical body undergoes a distinct, material change as the animal spirits, which communicate between the embodied soul and organs, literally move at a different rate.

The motion of these spirits will literally combine in the “pride of blood.”¹⁰

He does not necessarily believe that the Bianca he married is a lustful woman. However, just as he knows that Prospero’s “disposition” and “fair form” has been altered by humoral alteration, and that the physical essence of choler has prevented his friend Giuliano from making rational choices, he fears that the presence of the gulls in his home will change his wife’s body against her will. The medical theories of his day support his belief that heated blood stirred with lustful passion can lead Bianca into temptation. These spirits are entities with an agency that is entirely separate from the abstracted person he knows as his loving wife and they hold the essence of lust. When explaining his wife’s infidelity to himself, he creates that dualist excuse which echoes through the play (and later haunts the literature of “Double Subject Fallacy” ridden texts): “her body made her do it.”

Interestingly, Jonson immediately provides evidence that Thorello’s theory is true: agitated spirits do make the blood hot and blur reason. However, it is not Bianca whose physiology is impacted by the presence of the strange men in her house. Instead, it is Thorello who is altered by passions, which ironically arise from fantasizing about her passions. Jonson demonstrates how absurd his assumptions are when, shortly after his first soliloquy about his jealousy, Bianca enters the stage, lovingly calling him nicknames and expressing concern about his health. When she touches his forehead she says, “Good Lord, how it burns! Musse, keep you warm. Good truth, it is this new disease” (1.4.181-182). Early modern medical writers frequently associate excessive heat with humoral illness. Burton describes many of Thorello’s symptoms, including “fear and sorrow

¹⁰ Here, “pride” is defined as “Sexual desire, esp. in a female animal; heat” (*OED*, 11).

without a just cause, suspicion, jealousy, discontent, solitariness, irksomeness, continual cogitations, restless thoughts, vain imagination,” as consequences of melancholy (128). “If a humour which in its “natural” state tended toward the cool (phlegm or melancholy) was suddenly acted upon or scorched by heat, producing thereby what was identified as an “unnatural” humor, then a terrific altering in the health and character of the affected individual was understood to result” (Wood, 207n10).

The burning heat of jealousy is a common trope of the early modern stage and is frequently deployed by Shakespeare. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Leontes suddenly declares “Too hot, too hot” seeing his wife, Hermione, exchange pleasantries with his childhood friend, Polixenes. From that moment onwards, he acts irrationally and violently. David Houston Wood convincingly argues that Leontes’s exclamation reveals “the overlapping vocabularies of mental and physical disease in the humoral body” (188).

The humoral heat of jealousy is similarly central to understanding the nature of Othello’s jealousy. Ian Donaldson argues that Shakespeare, who acted in the original production of *Every Man in his Humour*, had Thorello and Bianca in mind as he wrote Othello and Desdemona.¹¹ In Othello, Desdemona misreads her husband’s humoral state when she claims that Othello’s body is humorally incompatible with the disease of jealousy. After she has lost the precious handkerchief (the symbol of her loyalty to her husband), she explains to Emilia that she has no fear that Othello will read into this mistake because, “my noble Moor/ Is true of mind and made of no such baseness/ As jealous creatures are” (3.4.24-26). Emilia is incredulous. She asks, “Is he not jealous?”

¹¹ For more on how Shakespeare’s memory of Jonson’s Thorello influences his depiction of jealousy in Othello, see Mary Floyd-Wilson’s *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (132-35) and Ian Donaldson’s *Ben Jonson: A Life* (130-132).

(3.4.28). Desdemona replies, “Who, he? I think the sun where he was born/ Drew all such humours from him” (3.4.29). She imagines the burning African sun, which darkened his skin, literally drawing the heat from his humoral body. According to Desdemona, the hot fever of jealousy has no place in his sun-weathered disposition. Of course Othello does have a humoral body that is all too prone to jealousy. Stuart Walton argues:

More than the irrelevant tokens of Iago’s resentment, this notion of Othello’s being too noble to have been prey to baseless jealousies is the play’s great decoy, what Alfred Hitchcock used to refer to in his own film plots as a ‘McGuffin,’ some apparently significant object, observation or occurrence that turns out to be wholly misleading or irrelevant. We are asked to believe that Othello is of such iron-willed resolution that only some scheme of diabolical Machiavellian intricacy could trap him in its snares, and yet at the same time we see him coming to a state of boiling rage at the mere suggestion, unfounded as he himself sees it to be, that his wife has been unfaithful to him. (84-185)

Not only are Desdemona and the audience falsely confident that Othello is a temperate, balanced man, Othello himself believes this to be true.

What sets Thorello apart from Leontes and Othello is his recognition of his own physiological change and the language he uses to explain it. Unlike Shakespeare’s heroes/villains who accuse their wives of being the source of their jealousy, Thorello recognizes that his painful passion is caused by a material disease, not by any of Bianca’s actions. As I discussed in the opening of the chapter, Thorello feels imprisoned by his bodily experience as the “searching vapour” of jealousy “spreads itself,/ Confusedly, through every sensitive part,” directly countering the desires of his reason-seeking mind (1.4.200-201). He repetitively uses slavery imagery to describe the relationship he has with his body.

Bane to my fortunes! What meant I to marry?
I that before was ranked in such content,

My mind attired in smooth, silken peace,
 Being free master of my own free thoughts,
 And now become a slave? (3.3.14-19)

Thorello is aware that he is not a free agent. He describes his thoughts as forces that undermine his authority. He imagines the moving forces of his suspicions moving through the organ of his brain:

My brain, methinks, is like an hourglass,
 And my imaginations, like the sands,
 Run dribbling forth to fill the mouth of time,
 Still charged with turning in the ventricle. (3.1.39)

Thorello is hyperconscious of the fact that his jealousy is a physical force that causes unhealthy, potentially dangerous fantasies. He draws a clear distinction between the will of his mind and the will of his body. He does not blame his wife for his agony; instead, he blames his humorally imbalanced body.¹²

“Drowned in a flood of joy”: Fear of Humoral Overabundance

After a confusing and upsetting interaction with Thorello, his servant, Piso, begins to experience his own humoral turn.

Whence should this flow of passion, trow, take head? Ha?
 Faith, I'll dream no longer of this running humour,
 For fear I sink. The violence of the stream
 Already hath transported me so far
 That I can feel no ground at all. (3.1.123-127)

Like Thorello, Piso is frightened of losing the self that he knows himself to be in this dangerous, powerful liquid force of overwhelming humor. Piso imagines Thorello as a man who has been swept away from the bank in a strong tide, and he dares not follow after Thorello for fear of drowning himself. Just being near the overwhelmingly

¹² Kenneth Jackson has a similar reading of Thorello's blame. "Thorello believes his jealousy stems from humoral madness, not the gallants' immoral conduct" (Jackson 67).

passionate man has “transported” Piso from a place of comfortable self-knowledge into a confusingly altered humoral state. Thorello uses a similar drowning analogy when he imagines his wife greeting Prospero’s friends. He describes Bianca becoming silent because “the voice, / Drowned in a flood of joy at their arrival, / Had lost her motion, state, and faculty” (3.3.27-29). “The voice” becomes a stand-in for his beloved wife, and he imagines her drowning in a flood of passions, losing “her motion, state, and faculty.”

Certainly, Jonson’s use of language that depicts the body as a river, lake, or sea and the passions as the filling, flowing, waters supports Paster’s claim that early modern people “grew up with a common understanding of his or her body as a semipermeable, irrigated container in which [each of these] humors moved” (8). However, the metaphor also exposes how anxiety producing this permeability was. These metaphors are particularly violent and disturbing. Thorello and Piso describe themselves in dire situations, lost, confused, and troubled by their passions. Their fear stems from the fact that they once had clear, definable, established senses of what kind of men they were and what kind of women they were married to. However, the passions unsettle these notions and leave them feeling unmoored.

As the play continues, the passion of jealousy becomes increasingly powerful, dangerous, and material. After Prospero makes a casual remark (mocking Thorello for his tendency towards paranoia), Thorello becomes convinced that he has been poisoned and calls out for medicine:

I feel me ill. Give me some mithridate;
Some mithridate and oil, good sister, fetch me.
Oh, I am sick at heart! I burn, I burn.
If you will save my life, go fetch it me. (4.3.21-24)

Of course, no one has literally poisoned him; however, by instigating his jealousy, Prospero has physically altered Thorello, increasing the heat of his body. Thorello's emotional pain is so intense that he cannot distinguish it from physical pain. However, Prospero observing Thorello's strange response is certainly able to distinguish mental disease from physical disease. He diagnoses Thorello, saying, "Oh strange humour! My very breath hath poisoned him" (4.3.24). Prospero knows that mithridate is not the cure that Thorello needs and attempts to assuage the influx of passions by appealing to Thorello's reason: "For shame, be wiser. Of my soul, there's no such matter" (4.3.31-32). Prospero is the first outsider to finally directly address the root of Thorello's secret suffering, "His jealousy is the poison he hath taken" (4.3.36).

Even after witnessing Thorello becoming "poisoned" by a mere suggestion, Prospero and Lorenzo Junior cruelly devise a plot that will intentionally make Bianca jealous of Thorello. They set this scheme in motion to get Hesperida out of Thorello's house so that Lorenzo Junior will be able to woo her. He cannot court her inside of the house because, according to Prospero, "the house is so stirred up with jealousy that there is no room for love to stand upright in" (4.3.53-54). The passion becomes a material entity that takes up physical space and impacts even those who have no reason to be affected by it.

"Dishumorings": The Humorous Conclusion

In the final scene, all of the main characters appear together in front of Judge Clement who finally exposes each of their predominant humors. Miola defines this as a "dishumouring." "As in classical comedy, dishumouring in Jonson takes the form of

exposure rather than reformation” (64).¹³ Doctor Clement, the character who is responsible for the “dishumouring” begins the process by asking all of the characters to “put down” their disturbing humors. He says, “First, you Senior Lorenzo, your cares [To Thorello and Bianca] you and you, your jealousy; [To Giuliano] you, your anger; [To Prospero] and you, your wit, sir” (5.3.372-374). When he asks, “Do you all approve my motion?” Prospero answers, “We do. I’ll be mouth for all” (5.3.377). All of the characters clearly want to be able to exist beyond their humoral faults, and they believe that they can. But, of course, as Lawrence Danson points out, the “dishumouring” project fails.

Thorello remains jealous even after everything is revealed to him. Lorenzo Senior remains melancholic and anxious, Giuliano and Stephano remain choleric and volatile. However, the fact that they long to rid themselves of their humors, as well as the language that they use to distinguish “themselves” from their humoral bodies, demonstrates that they are more than mere bodily fluctuation. Just as Polonius is a fool to think that he can diagnose and know all that Hamlet is just by observing his superficial displays of humoral characteristics, the ending of the play demonstrates that Doctor Clement is foolish for believing that he can know all that there is to know about these psychologically complex characters by merely indexing their humoral characteristics.

Coda: “The Book of Humours”

In the folio of Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels*, a crew of courtly ladies imagines their ideal selves in distinctly humoral terms. Phantaste makes a game out of asking “Put case, that we four now had the grant from Juno, to wish ourselves into what happy estate

¹³ Similar scenes of exposure occur in many of his comedies, including *Every Man Out of His Humour*, *Volpone*, *Epicene*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*.

we could, what would you wish to be?” (4.1.107-108). Moria exclaims that she would like to be the person who knows all the gossip; Philautia, whose name means self-love, already is who she wants to be, although she does desire more power. Phantaste has higher aspirations. She wants to be the perfect woman who will be committed to no one and torment the multitudes of men who fall for her:

. . . and in that person I would prove all manner of suitors, of all humours, and of all complexions, and never have any two of a sort. I would see how love, by the power of his object, could work inwardly alike in a choleric man, and a sanguine, in a melancholic and a phlegmatic, in a fool and a wise-man. . . and how he could vary outward . . . And, then, I to have a book made of all this, which I would call the ‘Book of Humours’, and every night read a little piece ere I slept, and laugh at it. (4.1.198–214)

What she really wants to be is an anatomist. She wants to know how love could “work inwardly” in each man’s body. She will gather empirical evidence about how different humoral bodies respond to love. “Offering a fantasy of knowledge as potent as any indulged by Marlowe’s Faustus, Phantaste’s “booke of humours” would record the results of a potentially endless series of experiments in the unity and diversity of human nature” (Scott-Warren 77). Her imagined “Book of Humours,” not only gives her the kind of pleasure that the audiences of Jonson’s humoral comedies gain from watching laudable figures expose their follies, but also could provide a real type of power. To know the humoral body is to know how one will react to anything. Therefore, her imagined self will be able to control and manipulate anyone. She becomes the playwright. She becomes the one who can characterize all of those around her, know, and predict exactly how each person will respond.

At one level, this is what Jonson, as the playwright, tries to do. He creates characters who represent myriad humoral traits and places them in different situations to

see how they will react. However, Jonson's characters seem to rebel against these clean, neat characterizations. The irrationally melancholic Lorenzo Senior attempts to reason his way into joy, the choleric Stephano pretends that he is melancholic so frequently that he almost manages to convince himself that he has a changed temperament, and the poor, tortured Thorello cries out, "I am more than just my jealousy." Jonson challenges the notion that mankind is classifiable; we need more than a "Book of Humours" to understand the complexities of human character.

Many neuroscientists are treating the new "Mapping the Brain" project as Phantaste treats the "Book of Humours." They share the assumption that knowing the material makeup of the physiological emotional body will allow them to understand all human behavior. In his recent *New York Times* opinion piece, "The Amygdala Made Me Do It," James Atlas suggests that recent science has led psychologists and philosophers alike to recognize that "the brain is an organ, too" (1). Furthermore, it is an organ that can be mapped. In his 2013 State of the Union Address, President Obama announced a plan to invest in the study of neuroscience with the ambitious goal of mapping the 85 to 100 billion neurons in the human brain "just as scientists mapped the human genome."

This new approach to understanding human behavior through brain research has led to a rise in the popularity of what Atlas cleverly calls the "can't help yourself book." Several bestsellers, including Charles Duhigg's *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* (2012), Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011) and Leonard Mlodinow's *Subliminal: How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behavior* (2012), demonstrate the rising concerns about whether or not we are ever fully able to change the way that our bodies physically interact with the world or control the ways that

we experience it. The books suggest, “the choices we make in day-to-day life are prompted by impulses lodged deep within the nervous system” (Atlas 1). They ask: can you help being what you are? Then, these authors present case studies and EEG scans results that suggest, “No. You cannot.” However, at the end of each book, the authors backpedal and include statements like, “You may be predisposed to making bad choices but that doesn’t mean that you’ll always make them or that your bad behavior is excused.” Despite the movement towards a monistic, embodied understanding of self, there is a persistent cultural insistence that that there is ultimately some abstracted “I” —a driver behind the wheel— even though, sometimes, the car will not let me drive it where I want it to go.

CHAPTER THREE

HUMOROUS HAL: MATERIAL MANIPULATION AND EMOTIONAL SELF-FASHIONING IN THE *HENRIAD*

In the last chapter, I focused on Jonson's characters that use the language of humoralism to take on Socrates' famous admonition, "nosce teipsum." The fact that so many characters in *Every Man in His Humour* can be consistently defined by their dominant humoral characteristics supports the core assumption of the neural doctrine: physiology is fate; man's nature is the balance of the material body, nothing more. However, I argued that the fact that these characters are able to recognize their humoral imbalances, express concern that their embodied passions and humors are other than their "real selves," and attempt to maintain agency over their bodies (albeit unsuccessfully), reveals Jonson's investment in an emerging dualism which involves the coexistence of an aspect of character cannot be explained by the humoral discourse.

Thorello, who "strives, even in despite of hell, myself to be," struggles to establish an identity that exists in relation to but separate from his humoral body (1.4.207). He imagines his body as diseased, his humors as vile waters, and his passions as poison. Thorello's body becomes what Julia Kristeva defines as the abject: "that from which the subject must detach itself in order to form a separate identity" (86). Shakespeare's Corporal Nim (of *Henry V* and *Merry Wives of Windsor*) has a very different relationship with his humors. Nim discusses his humoral body as frequently as

any character in Jonson's humoral comedies and uses the term "humor" more than any other character in Shakespeare's canon. Like Thorello, every time that Nim makes a decision, he suggests that he has no choice in the matter: when threatening to stab Pistol, he explains, "I would prick your guts a little, in good terms, as I may, and that's the humour of it" (*Henry V* 2.1.51-52); when departing for war with Pistol and Bardolph, he refuses to kiss Mistress Quickly saying, "I cannot kiss, that is the humour of it" (*Henry V* 2.3.52); when rejecting the call to go "unto the breach" during the war, he claims, "The knocks are too hot, and for mine own part I have not a case of lives. The humour of it is too hot, that is the plainsong of it" (*Henry V* 3.2.3-5). However, unlike Thorello, Nim never suggests that he has any investment in or awareness of a sense of self that exists apart from his humoral body. Paster reads Nim's humor as "that force within him which simply and unanswerably moves him to feel and do" ("The Humour of It" 52). Nim discusses his humor as a sign of self-acceptance; humor is the source of his "resistance to alteration" (52). She claims, The socially recognized autonomy of the humors served not only to excuse his boorishness but also to justify his unwillingness to regulate, articulate, or reflect upon his words and actions -- or indeed upon the curious nature of his world. The running of his bad humors against others, in that sense, are his actions, the stream of impulsive behaviors and disconnected speech that through their repetition constitute psychologically continuous self. ("The Humour of It" 53)

Certainly, Nim justifies his self-serving actions (to himself and others) by claiming "my humours made me do it." But, how plausible would this excuse be to an early modern audience? Are "psychologically continuous selves" constructed by the motion of

humors in the material body as Nim asserts?

Throughout Shakespeare's *Henriad*, Hal raises this question. Unlike Nim, who insists that "the humour of it" accounts for his life choices, Hal's ambiguous bodily state does not give him a "psychologically continuous self," nor are his humors self-justifying. Instead, for Hal, navigating a relationship with his body's agency is upsetting and complicated. Rather than using his body to define himself, Hal fashions his identity by manipulating and defying the ways that others read and classify his humoral state. By exposing the radically unpredictable nature of Hal, Shakespeare challenges notions of diagnosable humoral personality. In this chapter, I argue that Shakespeare opposes Nim's insistence that he can fully define himself and justify his actions by referring to his bodily humor. Instead, Shakespeare plays with the conventional tropes of humorally defined personality only to ultimately reveal their limitations.

Humoral Characterization in the *Henriad*

Many critics have noted Shakespeare's specific interest in the significance of embodied humors and passions in the four plays of the *Henriad*.¹ In 1963, U. C.

Knoepfmacher refuted Caroline Spurgeon's widely accepted claim that both parts of

¹ I am discussing the tetralogy, comprising *Richard II*; *Henry IV, Part 1*; *Henry IV, Part 2*; and *Henry V*. There is an ongoing critical debate about the extent to which the characters in each of the four plays should be read as consistent representations. Robert Adger Law describes the plays as distinct but linked "like separate coaches on a railway train" (187). I find Mary Crane's critique of Law particularly useful in framing my discussion of the four plays: "The metaphor may work if we picture the coaches as very different in shape and size" (299 n.86). Crane convincingly argues that:

It is not necessary to prove that Shakespeare intentionally created tetralogies for performance or publication; if a general sense of history as a larger process lay behind these individual plays, then their continuity can be explained as a result of this unifying concept. Each play could stand alone. The stylistic differences among them need not be smoothed over, nor need the connections be made seamless. Yet we are also right to see these individual plays as parts of a larger whole, a whole that seems to have been unique in the drama of Shakespeare's day. (299)

King Henry IV were devoid of continuous symbolic imagery by arguing,

“Shakespeare’s subtle metaphoric use of the Elizabethan theory of humors provides the basis for a symbolic nucleus which binds the play’s abundant references to blood, sickness, and the four elements” (497). According to Knoepfelmacher, Hotspur is sanguine, Henry IV is choleric, Falstaff is phlegmatic, and Hal is able to integrate the best aspects of each humor. Robert Reid expands on Knoepfelmacher’s claims by arguing, “The *Henriad* defines the period of Shakespeare’s most salient humoralism” (474).²

Reid maintains that Shakespeare uses these characters to exemplify each humoral trait like the emblems and rubrics in Henry Peacham’s well-known *Minerva Britannia* and the epigrams in John Harington’s translation of *The School of Salerne*, which neatly define and illustrate the four humoral types. However, unlike Knoepfelmacher, Reid makes a case for reading Hal as sanguine, Henry IV as melancholic, and Hotspur as choleric. They only agree on Falstaff’s phlegmatic nature.

Falstaff, whose abundant phlegmatism makes him so deeply beloved by his fellow drunks and audiences alike, is immediately recognizable by his enormous, rotund, flatulent body, which is consistently described by its humoral moisture. The consuming, drunk, leaky, and tremendous body of Falstaff is impossible to separate from his identity.

² According to Reid, the eight plays that Shakespeare wrote between 1597-1600 “form the heyday of explicit Shakespearean humoralism” (474). Reid supports this claim by explaining that in the fourteen plays Shakespeare wrote prior to 1597, “humor” appears three times per play; in the fifteen after 1600, it appears only once per play. However, in 1 *King Henry IV* through *Twelfth Night*, the word appears an average of ten times per play. I agree with his specific claim that these plays are Shakespeare’s “most humoral.” However, Reid’s use of the concordance is unconvincing. For example, Nym is responsible for all 6 uses of the word “humour” in *Henry V*. The word also only appears only twice in 2 *King Henry IV* (in which Nym does not appear). Furthermore, Reid never discusses *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, written in 1602 (post “humoral heyday”), in which the word “humour” appears 15 times, 11 of which are in Nym’s dialogue.

The plays focus “obsessively” on Falstaff’s fatness (Moulton 236). Reid points out how perfectly Salerno’s epigram of “The Phlegmatic Man” characterizes Falstaff:

The Flegmatiqu are most of no great growth,
Inclining to be rather fat and square:
Given much unto their ease, to rest and sloth,
Content in knowledge to take little share,
To put themselves to any paine most loth.
So dead their spiritis, so dull their sences are:
Still either sitting, like to folke that dreame,
Or else still spitting, to avoid the flegme:
One qualitie doth yet these harmes repaire,
That for the most part Flegmatique are faire. (482)

Although Falstaff is certainly not “faire” like Salerno’s phlegmatic man, he embodies all the other characteristics: fatness, slothfulness, bodily leakiness. Hal echoes Salerno’s language of humoral classification in his description of Falstaff: “Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack and unbuttoning thee after supper and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know” (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.2-5). There is no doubt that the doctrine of the four humors specifically influenced Shakespeare’s *Henriad* or that Falstaff’s fat, wet, and slow body frequently corresponds with specific depictions of the “phlegmatic man” which appear in works like *The School of Salerne* and *Minerva Britannia*. Similarly, Hotspur’s choleric rages (which I will discuss in more detail) are consistently defined in humoral terms. However, I want to challenge the commonly held critical assumption that the *Henriad*’s characters “exemplify” the Galenic temperaments. Shakespeare allows these over-abundantly humoral characters to interact with a character whose physiology proves to be difficult to predict: Hal, the humorous prince.

Although many characters try to pinpoint the humor of Hal, and Hal attempts to use

humoral language to define himself, he ultimately remains unclassifiable. Hal is always as he describes himself in *I Henry IV*: “I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight” (*I Henry IV* 2.5.86-88). The way that Hal uses the discourse of humoralism to narrate his intentionally constructed identity is entirely different from the way he uses it to classify others. Believing that he is of all humors, he rejects the notion that he can ever be humorally defined. Instead, he claims to have the power to shape the substance of his self. The extent to which he succeeds in this endeavor is questionable, but his confidence in humoral self-fashioning is not.

Fashioning the Humoral Self

According to Matthew Greenfield, the moderator of the online forum, “Shakespeare and Embodiment: An E-Conversation,” the question (which is so central to Hal) about the extent to which early modern writers believed in the possibility of self-control and temperance is one of the primary debates among scholars who work on early modern bodies. Notably, two of the most influential scholars on humoralism, Paster and Schoenfeldt, disagree on this issue (Greenfield 2). In *The Body Embarrassed* Paster discusses the ways in which the early moderns were defined by the liquids of their humoral bodies. She describes the power of the actor’s humoral agency, claiming, “Above all, the actor can offer the image of an affective and physical control so masterful as to quell, if only for a time, the inner turbulence of his own humourality” (20). However, she implies that this affective and physical control is only available for the duration of the performance. In the real world, the humors determined everything about a person’s life experience; “The men and women of early modern Europe understood their

mortality, described their sensations and bodily events, and often experienced physical and psychological benefit in humoral terms” (*The Body Embarrassed* 7). She argues that humoral theory was “instrumental in the production and maintenance of gender and class difference” (*The Body Embarrassed* 7).

Paster develops the notion of “an ecology of the passions peculiar to the psychological materialism of early modern thought” (*The Body Embarrassed* 42). This ecology of passions accounts for the influence of the embodied passions on the external environment and of the environment on the passions. In other words, “the body can momentarily relinquish agency to the air that surrounds and flows into it” (*The Body Embarrassed* 41). It is always either the body or the air that has agency. There is no abstracted self who has an ability to shape this body or control the way that it interacts with its environment. Instead, Paster describes the passions and humors as independent external forces which act within the body “just as the forces of wind and waves act in the natural world” (*Humoring the Body* 6). Paster is not suggesting that one should take this claim metaphorically. Instead, she suggests that the human body literally moves with the passions, like the “loving palm trees” growing together as a result of passions that Robert Burton describes in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. She claims that Burton does not discuss the trees as an analogy. Instead, the passions literally push the trees together; man becomes subject to his body. This is far more consistent with Nim’s version of humoralism than it is with Hal’s. A man’s character and nature is a body that can be categorized and defined.

However, reading humors as “fixed and irreducible” does not consider the fact that “more often in humoral discourse... humors are represented as a part of the natural body

that can and must be manipulated through various dietary regimens for the achievement of physical health and emotional stability” (Schoenfeldt, 25). Schoenfeldt understands the early modern conception of agency very differently. *In Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, Schoenfeldt refutes Paster’s interpretation of the uncontrollable force of passion. Schoenfeldt argues that Paster’s reading of the body as a “semipermeable, irrigated container in which humors moved sluggishly” ignores the “individual subject’s willing and unembarrassed adoption of therapies of self-regulation” (15). He claims that the self-regulation of the humoral body allowed early modern subjects to “produce the parameters of individual subjectivity” (15). For him, the early modern body is a site of self-fashioning.

Schoenfeldt convincingly argues that Galenic humoralism can be seen as a form of self-empowerment in the struggle for self-control. He understands the humoral discourse as one that empowered early moderns to “produce the parameters of individual subjectivity” or fashion their identities through the careful management of their humoral bodies (15). Analyzing the humoral fluctuations in terms of self-control and self-improvement, he concludes, “The Galenic body achieves health ... by carefully monitoring and manipulating the inevitable and literal influences of the outside world, primarily through therapies of ingestion and excretion” (22). Therefore, regulation of the material body constitutes individual power. But Paster takes issue with Schoenfeldt’s reading, claiming, “[He] simply ignores the realities of social and gender hierarchy everywhere in the period” (“The Humour of It” 65). By implying that all individuals are equal under the laws of early modern Galenic humoralism, Schoenfeldt “mistakenly presumes an unmarked ‘individual’ prior to biological—that is to say hierarchical—

classification” (21 *Humoring the Body*).

Schoenfeldt’s reading of the humoral body leaves an important question unanswered: If the body can be fashioned, what is doing the fashioning? The humors that Nim describes tell us more about what Nim desires to do than about what he is capable of doing. Though Nim refers to the humor of his body as a matter of fact and claims that the humors are what make him try to stab Pistol, avoid the embrace of Mistress Quickly, and stay off the battlefield, neither the audience nor the other characters are encouraged to believe that he is actually unable to act differently.

Neither Paster’s nor Schoenfeldt’s explanation of humoral management accounts for the complicated way that Hal constructs himself: he is not the passive body, moved by winds of passion as Paster describes, nor does he manage his humoral changes by altering his physical body. Instead, he intentionally manipulates how others perceive his humoral body. This manipulation can be read as an act of what Steven Greenblatt defines as “self-fashioning.” Greenblatt asserts “In sixteenth-century England there were both selves and a sense that they could be fashioned” (1). He defines the fashioning as “the shaping of a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving” (2). Greenblatt is invested in the question: are we the principal makers of our own identity, or are we shaped by the cultural institutions which surround us? I rephrase Greenblatt’s question to focus on the physiological aspect of identity and ask: are we the principal makers of our own identity, or are we shaped by the material realities of our bodies?

Comparing Humors: The Deceptive Humoral Flux of Hotspur

The unknowable nature of Hal’s humor is frequently brought up by characters

who are baffled by his behavior. Doll Tearsheet asks Falstaff, “Sirrah, what humour’s the Prince of?” expressing her confusion about this unsettling future king who she can bizarrely count among her acquaintances (*2 Henry IV* 2.4.210). Hal’s father cannot define the humor of his son any better than Doll. Henry IV describes the unpredictable nature of Hal: “He is flint/ As humorous as winter, and as sudden/ As flaws congealed in the spring of day” (*2 Henry IV* 4.3.34-36). When Hal tells his father, “I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,/ Be more myself,” Henry IV does not know what Hal imagines this “self” to be (*1 Henry IV* 3.2.92-93). Even the man who believes he knows Hal best, his old friend, drinking companion, and second father-figure, Falstaff, is shocked to find that even he cannot predict Hal’s humor. After telling Falstaff, “Presume not that I am the thing I was,” Hal brutally banishes him from his company (*2 King Henry IV* 5.5.54). What “thing” was Hal? What “thing” is he now? What is his humor made of? The plays leave these questions unanswerable.

While the Hal of all humors rejects the notion of diagnosable humoral personality, Harry Percy, (better known by his nickname, Hotspur) further reveals Shakespeare’s interest in challenging humoral classification. Unlike Hal, whose body inconsistently changes, Hotspur’s body is dominated by a single humor: choler. His very name invokes the hot, dry humor. Lady Percy tells her husband, “A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen/ As you are tossed with” (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.71-72).³ Hotspur’s body is so deeply dominated by the restless, moving choler that he cannot even control his active body long

³ Paster describes how these animal metaphors illustrate the “interpretive literalism” of early modern bodily and emotional self-experience (“Melancholy Cats, Lugged Bears, and Cosmology” 113). Literalism means that Hotspur’s choler must be understood as a material condition of the body.

enough to rest his head in his wife's lap for the length of a song.

To a certain extent, Hotspur's choleric nature makes him admirable. After his death, his wife lovingly remembers that other "noble youths" attempted to fashion their humoral bodies after his natural state. She claims:

In speech, in gait,
In diet, in affections of delight,
In military rules, humors of blood,
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashioned others. (*2 Henry IV* 2.3.28-32)

However, his choler is also deeply problematic. The initial conflict of *1 King Henry IV* is initiated by Hotspur's overactive humors. When Henry IV demands to know why Hotspur refuses to give over his war prisoners, Hotspur, like Nim, asks to be excused for his poor decision by explaining that his humors made him act as he did. He describes his body as "dry with rage and extreme toil" (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.30). His passions were still high from the act of shedding blood and he felt this dry heat in his already excessively choleric body. He claims that these humors dictated the way that he communicated with the King's effeminate messenger. Hotspur describes the messenger's neatness, his sweet perfume, and his use of "holiday and lady terms" (*1 King Henry IV* 1.3.45). Clearly, he found this messenger abhorrent and was infuriated to be asked to take orders from a man who was so humorally incompatible with a warrior like himself. However, he explains to the king that he now recognizes that his response was irrational. He explains,

Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answered neglectingly, I know not what—
He should, or should not—for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman

Of guns, and drums, and wounds, God save the mark! (*1 King Henry IV*
1.3.50-55)

Although he realizes that he did answer the king's messenger "neglectingly," he does not take responsibility for his disrespect. Instead, his choler increases even as he recalls the scene. Hotspur reasserts that he was "made" to answer as he did by his impatience (another personality trait directly associated with choler).

Similarly, after his first failed confrontation with Henry IV, Hotspur demands immediate gratification, even though he simultaneously recognizes the need to be patient; he tells Northumberland, "For I will ease my heart,/ although it be with hazard of my head" (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.125-126). Hotspur distinguishes between his heart, which contains the overactive passions of his humorous body, and his head, the seat of reason. In the battleground of Hotspur's body, passion, driven by his dominant humor, always wins.

Northumberland stops Hotspur before he can take any action, accusing him of being "drunk with choler" (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.127). According to Northumberland, Hotspur must learn to mitigate the passions, which are instigated by the overabundant heat of his blood. Northumberland does not read Hotspur's audacity as courage but as weakness. He tells Hotspur,

Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool
Art thou to break into this woman's mood,
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own! (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.234-36)

Northumberland uses the misogynistic commonplace to shame Hotspur, telling him that he has a gossip's mood; his bodily complexion makes him unable to listen to the opinions of others. Hotspur admits that he is guilty of this inability to curb his rage and goes on to explain what it feels like to embody this wasp-stung impatience: "Why, look you, I am

whipped and scourged with rods,/ Nettled and stung with pismires, when I hear/ Of this vile politician Bolingbroke” (*I Henry IV* 1.3.237-39). Hotspur’s choleric rage manifests itself as unbearable physical pain. Revenge becomes a primal, bodily urge.

In his youth, Henry IV shared Hotspur’s humoral classification. Richard II describes both the young Henry (then known as Henry Bolingbrook) and his rival, Thomas Mowbray: “High-stomach’d are they both, and full of ire;/ In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire” (*Richard II* 1.1.18-19). Mowbray explains his anger at Bolingbroke by describing the literal heat of his blood: “The blood is hot that must be cooled for this./ Yet can I not of such tame patience boast/ As to be hushed and naught at all to say” (*Richard II* 1.1.51-53). He knows that only a choleric man would be so angry about Bolingbroke’s petty words, but admits that he is physiologically prone to impatience. Richard treats both young men’s choler like a disease that can be treated. He calls them “Wrath-kindled gentlemen” and asks that they “purge this choler without letting blood” (*Richard II* 1.1.152-153). He likens forgiving and forgetting to bloodletting, and compares himself, the calmer of their tempers, to a medical doctor:

This we prescribe, though no physician;
Deep malice makes too deep incision;
Forget, forgive; conclude, and be agreed;
Our doctors say this is no time to bleed.
Good uncle, let this end where it begun.
We’ll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son. (*Richard II* 1.1.154-159)

However, Shakespeare quickly demonstrates that calming is certainly not the equivalent of bleeding. Neither young man is humorally altered by Richard’s attempts to calm them. As Hotspur does in *I Henry IV*, Mowbray responds by describing the embodied nature of his choleric anger:

I am disgraced, impeached, and baffled here,
 Pierced to the soul with slander's venom'd spear,
 The which no balm can cure but his heart blood
 Which breathed this poison. (*Richard II* 1.1.170-173)

Like Thorello, who feels poisoned by Prospero's rumors, Mowbray draws no distinction between the emotional pain of humiliation and the material pain poison inflicts on the body.

Henry IV is aware of the qualities that he had once shared with the young Hotspur. However, his son, Hal, reminds him more of the melancholic Richard, who he deposed. In an accusatory tone, he explains to Hal,

For all the world
 As thou art to this hour was Richard then
 When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,
 And even as I was then is Percy now. (*I Henry IV* 3.2.93-96)

However, Henry IV's blood does not maintain the heat that filled his body when he was a defiant youth. Age cools his humoral heat, and he is well aware of his transformation. In *I Henry IV*, he begins his chastisement of Henry Percy by criticizing his own humoral body and accusing Hotspur of taking advantage of his newly melancholic state:

My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
 Unapt to stir at these indignities,
 And you have found me, for accordingly
 You tread upon my patience. (*I Henry IV* 1.3.1-4)

He goes on to explain that he recognizes his "condition" has been "smooth as oil, soft as young down," and therefore, he has "lost that title of respect" (*I Henry IV* 3.1.7-8). However, distinguishing between his "mighty and feared self" and his "soft condition," he then makes that Thorello-like claim: "I will from henceforth rather be myself."

What does this claim to "be myself" mean? Hal and Henry IV both refer to an

abstracted self that exists beyond the present condition of the physical body; both understand this selfhood as a regulating force that interacts with the humors and passions but is distinct from them. I will later discuss Hal's complicated humoral self-fashioning, but first, I ask, does the consistently choleric Hotspur share this abstracted selfhood? Does he believe himself to be an agent that can withstand the pain of this anger and act with patience or does his choler have total control over his body? Is he his choler?

Hotspur consistently describes his own choler as too powerful to be contained in his body. Hal also recognizes that Hotspur's body is too small a container for his exuberant passion. After killing Hotspur, he memorializes him, remembering that "When that this body did contain a spirit,/ A kingdom for it was too small a bound" (*I Henry IV* 5.4.88-89). However, Worcester, who frequently takes on the role of Hotspur's adviser, is less certain about the extent to which Hotspur's choler can be managed. After Hotspur's choleric outburst in 1.3, which culminates in him promising to dedicate his life to avenging Henry IV's insult and threatening to poison Hal's ale, Worcester recognizes that any attempt to calm Hotspur's choler is futile. Yet, Worcester does not go so far as to suggest that Hotspur *is* his choler; he takes his leave, saying, "Farewell, kinsman. I'll talk to you/ When you are better tempered to attend," suggesting that his choleric temperament may be altered at a different time (*I Henry IV* 1.3.233).

Later in the play, Worcester begins to sound more like Nim as he questions whether Hotspur is able to be anything other than his choleric humor. When he learns of Henry IV's peace treaty before the Battle of Shrewsbury, he decides not to tell his nephew about it. He justifies his decision to Vernon by explaining that he suspects the king may pardon Hotspur but punish the rest of the Percy clan because:

My nephew's trespass may be well forgot;
 It hath the excuse of youth and heat of blood,
 And an adopted name of privilege—
 A hare-brained Hotspur, governed by a spleen.
 All his offenses live upon my head,
 And on his father's. (*1 Henry IV* 5.2.16-21)

Since young Harry Percy has a body so prone to choler that he warrants the nickname “Hotspur,” Worcester believes that the king will not hold him accountable for his behavior.⁴

The question of Hotspur's culpability is complicated. On one hand, Worcester imagines Hotspur's violence being acquitted because he is “governed by spleen” as Nim is governed by his humor. It is not Hotspur's choice to be rebellious; it is his young, humorally imbalanced body's. However, if Hotspur is his spleenful body, then what is there to pardon? Instead, Worcester believes in a second subject, an immaterial, redeemable Hotspur. According to Worcester, Henry IV will distinguish between a young, guilty overactive spleen and Hotspur, condemning one and forgiving the other. However, Worcester is certain that he and his brother will not be so easily forgiven. The young body is naturally hot, which makes ambitious passions more difficult to control, while the old body is naturally cold and less likely to be unruly.

The question of Hotspur's culpability is particularly relevant now as the introduction of neuroscience into the current courtroom brings complicated questions about bodies and agency to the legal system. Courts must answer the same question that Shakespeare has Worcester ask: to what extent can young, undeveloped, materially unstable bodies be held accountable for their actions? This question has been central to

⁴ The fact that Henry IV pardoned the young conspirator Aumerle at the end of Richard II lends credibility to Worcester's certainty.

several deeply controversial court cases including the 2005 *Roper v. Simmons* case.

Christopher Simmons was found guilty of murdering a woman while he was still underage and was sentenced to death. In the appeal, the court considered a brief filed by the American Medical Association which cites structural and anatomical studies of the brain. The brief indicates that the adolescent brain is materially different from the mature brain. The prefrontal cortex, (which is considered to play a critical role in the “higher order” functions of the brain, “that is, abstraction and reasoning; understanding others’ reactions; planning; organizing; controlling impulses; emotional regulation; understanding, processing, and communicating information; establishing, changing, and maintaining a mental set; handling sequential behavior; using knowledge to regulate behavior; and exhibiting empathy regarding how behavior affects others”) is not completely developed during adolescence and does not mature until early adulthood (Fabian 740). The brief was deeply influential in the court’s decision to rule that it is unconstitutional to impose capital punishment for crimes committed while under the age of 18.

As T. Buller claims in the introduction to the *Journal of Medical Ethics*’ special edition on neuroethics, the implications of emerging “neurotechnologies” for morality and the law have been highly contested in both the academic and the popular presses. He concludes:

If rationality is a necessary condition of responsibility, and neuroscience identifies how these capacities are linked to brain function, then it is difficult to resist the notion that the level of neurological function is relevant to determining our moral obligations toward others (persons or animals) or to the assignment of responsibility. (Buller, 63)

Can Hotspur be held accountable for his choler when it is well known that his overactive

spleen governs his reason? Should the 17 year old Christopher Simmons be acquitted if his prefrontal cortex is not yet mature? These questions require us to clearly identify what it is that we imagine doing the acting. The claim that the underdeveloped brain or the spleen makes rational action impossible requires a belief in an agent that would be rational if not for the defect.

Shakespeare presents this problematic assumption, but refuses to either justify it or condemn it. For example, when Hotspur crosses Glyndwr, he uses the “Nim defense,” claiming that his body is what it is and does what it does. He justifies his harmful hot temper saying, “I cannot choose. Sometimes he angers me” (3.1.144). Worcester, like Northumberland, scolds Hotspur for his impatience. He accuses him of being “too wilful-blame” (*1 Henry IV* 3.1.173). He argues that Hotspur most certainly can choose how he acts and tells Hotspur that he ought to be able to change the way that his choler impacts his decisions:

You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault.
 Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood--
 And that's the dearest grace it renders you--
 Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,
 Defect of manners, want of government,
 Pride, haughtiness, opinion and disdain,
 The least of which haunting a nobleman
 Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain
 Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
 Beguiling them of commendation. (*1 Henry IV* 3.1.176-85)

The “fault” of his choler makes him brave but also haunts him and corrupts his other attributes. Hotspur claims that he is “schooled” by this speech and entirely rejects the “I cannot choose” claim that he has just made. Instead, he (the abstracted self) takes agency over his body, and therefore over his actions, by promising to “amend this fault”

(3.1.186).

Hal's Humoral Assumptions

In the opening of *I Henry IV*, Hal presents himself as a character who is much more likely than Hotspur to take responsibility for his decisions because he is able to draw a clearer distinction between his abstracted self and the material forces of passion and humors. He rejects the notion that his young body has any agency over him. Instead, not only is he able to manage his own humors, but he can also manipulate how others perceive his humoral state. In his first soliloquy, Hal describes his process of self-construction, claiming, "I know you all, and will a while uphold/ The unyoked humour of your idleness" (*I Henry IV* 1.3.173-174). This assertion relies on two assumptions: (1) all of Hal's Eastcheap companions are dominated by the same idle humor, and that knowing the quality of that idle humor will allow him to entirely "know" all of these people; (2) he is in control of "upholding this humour;" it is his choice to partake in the idle, phlegmatic humor of Falstaff whenever he chooses. He reasserts his confidence in these assumptions with his next analogy:

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him. (*I Henry IV* 1.3.175-181)

In order to convince his royal family and the larger English public that his body is strangled by "the foul and ugly mists of vapours," he (the sun) must surround himself with people who are materially inferior to him (base contagious clouds). In order for his plan to work, Hal needs everyone else to assume that the company he keeps will change

his humors. However, Hal is convinced that he is in no real danger of catching their “contagion.” He simply uses his Boar’s Head companions to mask his true self, confident that he will be able to “please again to be himself” whenever he wants to; he will be unaltered by his barroom adventures. Hal insists that he can perform an alternate humoral identity without actually embodying it. However, Shakespeare demonstrates that both of these assumptions are ill conceived.

First, Shakespeare challenges Hal’s belief that he is naturally humorally different from all of his companions (who share the same “unyoked humour of idleness”). In the opening scenes of *2 Henry IV* Hal has a very personal conversation about his father’s illness with one of his dearest companions, Poins. As he discusses the pain of his grief, Hal pauses to condescendingly qualify his declaration of friendship by claiming that Poins is “as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend” (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.17). Furthermore, Hal asserts that he has a primarily pragmatic interest in Poins’s advice; he knows that Poins is a dependable gauge of public opinion and tells him, “Never a man’s thought in world keeps the roadway better than thine” (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.45). However, despite Hal’s multiple claims to the contrary, Poins has obviously become more than just a base cloud that covers his sunny rays. The close friendship that the two young men share is recognized by the rest of the population of the Boar’s Head. Doll asks Falstaff, “Why does the prince love [Poins] so?” (*2 Henry IV* 2.4.217). Falstaff feels threatened by the intimacy of their relationship and writes to Hal, “Be not too familiar with Poins” (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.118).

Hal obviously does not follow this advice. He admits to Poins that he has become as “engrafted” to him as he had been to Falstaff (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.50). Recognizing how

close he is to Poins makes Hal rethink his construction of himself as humorally superior to his friends. In fact, he mocks himself for knowing Poins as well as he does. “What a disgrace is it to me to remember/ thy name, or to know thy face tomorrow,” he says to Poins, claiming that he believes himself to be degraded by their ongoing friendship (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.13). However, rather than shunning his friend, Hal goes on to recite a literal laundry list demonstrating that he knows how many shirts and pairs of silk stockings Poins owns. Poins reciprocates an intimate knowledge of Hal, telling him “I am your shadow,” suggesting that he literally follows the motions of Hal’s body (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.137).

Falstaff is quick to point out that Hal and Poins have a great deal in common. He explains that Hal and Poins eat the same foods (conger and fennel), play the same drinking games, and share “such other gambol faculties a’ has, that show a weak mind and an able body” (2 *Henry IV* 2.4.224). Falstaff also describes the similarities between their bodies. He claims, “The weight of a hair will turn the scales between their avoirdupois” (2 *Henry IV* 2.4.225). Even “their legs are both of a bigness” (2 *Henry IV* 2.4.117). Furthermore, like Hal, Poins is born to a landed family. Obviously, Poins’s class status is incomparable to the crown prince’s, but still sets him apart from the other Boar’s Head regulars. Poins complains that Hal refuses to see him as an equal. He claims, “By this light, I am well spoke on. I can hear it with my own ears./ The worst that they can say of me is that I am a second brother” (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.51). Poins’s claim to relatively high birth further complicates the dividing line that Hal draws between himself and his companions. Hal recognizes that his status as prince is as tenuous as Poins’s birth order is unfortunate, since his father usurped the previous king rather than inheriting

the crown. Hal will be the first of his father's descendants to ascend to the throne, and he shares his father's concern that his blood might not be royal. What really distinguishes Hal from Poins?

In his pamphlet, *Problemes of Beauty, Love, and all Humane Affections*, originally published in 1605, Italian anthologist Tommaso Buoni phrases this question differently. His section "On Beauty" contains the subsection titled: "Why do Princes and women of honorable birth prove for the most part fairer both in body and mind, then women of baser condition?" Buoni's answer has little to do with lineage and everything to do with what they eat and drink:

Their delicate, and exquisite diet, both in their meates, & drinks, make their bloud more pure, their vitall spirits more lively, their complection more Beautifull, and their nature more noble, so that passing their time without interruption of any troublesome or disorderly molestations, they become by their high thoughts and honorable imaginations, both Beautifull and gentle in aspect above other women of inferior condition.
(E3v-E4)

Buoni recognizes the connection between one's diet and lifestyle and the functioning of their organs, which produce the humors that cause passion. Those who have better economic and social statuses are able to improve their affections and humoral natures through their material conditions. However, much to his father's disappointment, Hal has given up on the material conditions associated with his "honorable birth." Hal eats and drinks with characters like Falstaff, has been treating his body like a commoner's, and putting his organs through the same trials as the other Boar's Head regulars. Having shunned the "delicate and exquisite diet," what makes his thoughts "high" or his imaginations "honorable"? How can he be sure that he is the sun and the others are clouds? The humoral distinction between Hal and his "vile company" becomes blurred to

the point of being meaningless.

Shakespeare also raises doubt about Hal's second assumption (that he will not be humorally altered by the company that he keeps). As Hal intends, his father is convinced otherwise. Henry IV believes that Hal has done permanent damage to his body by keeping "so common-hackneyed in the eyes of men,/ So stale and cheap to vulgar company" (*I Henry IV* 3.2.40-41). Henry IV has had direct experience with men of good humor being corrupted by bad company. As a young man, he had characterized his cousin Richard II as a "a happy gentleman in blood and lineaments" until "unhappied and disfigured" by the flatterers in his court (*Richard II* 3.1.8-9). According to Henry IV, Hal has undergone a similar literal disfigurement; he describes how "riot and dishonour stain the brow/Of my young Harry" (*I Henry IV* 1.1.84-85). The extent to which Henry IV believes that Hal's body has been harmed by his riotous ways is exposed when he accuses Hal of being a traitor. He describes this fear in distinctly humoral terms:

Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
Base inclination and the start of spleen
To fight against me under Percy's pay,
To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns,
To show how much thou art degenerate. (*I Henry IV* 3.2.124-128)

According to Henry IV, even if his spleenful son has not yet betrayed him, he knows that Hal's humoral nature is that of a traitor.

Warwick has a very different way of reading the humorous Hal and debates with the King about whether Hal is permanently stained or temporarily masked. Warwick has discovered or intuited the plot that Hal secretly reveals to the audience in his soliloquy. Warwick tells the king:

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite:

The prince but studies his companions
 Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,
 'Tis needful that the most immodest word
 Be looked upon and learnt, which once attained,
 Your highness knows, comes to no further use
 But to be known and hated; so, like gross terms,
 The Prince will in the perfectness of time
 Cast off his followers; and their memory
 Shall as a pattern or a measure live,
 By which his grace must mete the lives of others,
 Turning past evils to advantages. (2 *Henry IV* 4.3.67-78)

Like Hal, Warwick rejects the notion that the dominant qualities of Hal's current companions are able to humorally influence Hal. He imagines Hal's followers like the words of a foreign and base language that Hal studies only to disregard. When it comes time, Warwick and Hal are convinced that Hal can cast off their humors and reveal his true nature.

Shakespeare brings this assumption about Hal's incorruptibility into question by demonstrating the extent to which the characteristics of Falstaff's rotund body are contagious. For example, Hal describes a page boy who was an untainted "Christian" child before beginning his employment with Falstaff. Just a short while later, Hal exclaims, "And look if the fat villain have not transformed him ape" (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.58). Hal describes more than just a change in the boy's apparel;⁵ something fundamental in the boy's humoral body has begun to mirror Falstaff's. The boy mocks Bardolph in the same manner that Falstaff does (by joking about his red face). Only Poins, who also recognizes the change in the child, seems to be disturbed by the way that the boy's

⁵ The Norton glosses Hal's exclamation about the boy as "Falstaff has perhaps dressed the Page in an outlandish livery or uniform." However, I argue that Poins's concern about the child and the boy's similarities to Falstaff indicate that Hal also refers to the page boy's transformed humoral state.

acquaintance with Falstaff has altered him. He describes the boy as “this good blossom” and wishes that he “could be kept from cankers!” (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.78). As Lorenzo senior wants to protect his son from Prospero, and Henry IV wants to protect Hal from the whole Eastcheap population, Poins wants to protect the boy from Falstaff’s transformative and corrupting powers.

This notion that a humorally balanced person, like the pre-Falstaff page boy, could be materially corrupted by bad company and slothful habits is consistent with the dominant early modern medical theories. Although the humoral body determines much of one’s complexion, the “second nature” within humoral theory was one’s “qualities” which were articulated as one’s moral disposition, or habits (Shenk 127). “The tendencies of the bodily complexion could be ruled and managed, suppressed and aroused, and generally disposed by the habits” (Shenk 128). Bad company and slothful habits can corrupt even the most perfectly humorally balanced body. According to Thomas Elyot, if a person does not focus on an active, temperate life, then “by sluggardy and idleness the said activite is appalled and the wyttes consumed: wherby men be made unapte for the life which is actife or politike” (*Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man* 163).

Falstaff directly counters this idea that temperance leads to an active life. Instead, he explains to the Lord Chief Justice that King Henry, who suddenly becomes afflicted with a “whoreson apoplexy” is sick because of his lack of drinking (2 *Henry IV* 1.2.97-98). He claims that the sudden malady “hath its original from much grief, from study, and perturbation of the brain,” (2 *Henry IV* 1.2.105-106). He justifies this claim by citing the expert on all bodily functions: “I have read the cause of his effects in Galen” (2

Henry IV 1.2.105-106). Falstaff suggests that Hal's brother, John, is afflicted with the same humoral disease that temporarily affects the king, and he suggests that John suffers because of his "sober-blooded" body (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.79). Falstaff proselytizes the humoral dangers of sobriety:

There's never none of these demure boys to any proof; for thin drink doth so over-cool their blood, making many fish meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; and then, when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards— which some of us should be too but for inflammation. (*2 Henry IV*, 4.2.81)

He associates sober men with the humoral disease of green-sickness, or chlorosis, suffered by virginal women (OED). According to Falstaff, many men would be weak, foolish, and cowardly if not for the saving powers of liquor. He describes how "A good sherry-sack hath a two-fold operation in it" (*2 Henry IV*, 4.2.81). The first is purely humoral:

It ascends me into the brain; dries me there the foolish and dull and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit (*2 Henry IV*, 4.2.87-92)

He describes the sack as if it is a psycho-pharmaceutical drug. The beverage counteracts the undesirable material workings of the brain. The other "operation" of the sack also refers to the way in which it is able to change the working of the material body:

Your excellent sherry is the warming of the blood; which cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice. But the sherry warms and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extremes; it illumineth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puff'd up with this doth any deed of courage. And this valour comes of sherry. (*2 Henry IV*, 4.2.93-101)

According to Falstaff, courage not only comes from the "excellent sherry," it *is* the

sherry. He claims, that skill in the weapon is nothing without a strong drink, because “Skill in a weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning is a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil till sack commences it and sets it in act and use” (2 *Henry IV*, 4.2.101-103). It is not the courageous man who is doing the acting; the agent is the drink as it becomes manifested in the man’s humoral body.

Falstaff asserts that his influence on Hal (which has primarily been to encourage Hal to drink) results in Hal’s altered (and superior) body. Without the all-important sherry, Hal is humorally cowardly as a result of “the cold blood he did/ naturally inherit of his father” (2 *Henry IV*, 4.2.105). However, under the influence of Falstaff, he has “like lean, sterile, bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of fertile sherry, that he is become very hot and valiant” (2 *Henry IV*, 4.2.108). Falstaff takes pride in his ability to shape Hal’s body, and boasts that he has taught Hal and his companions to “forswear thin potations and to addict themselves to sack” (2 *Henry IV*, 4.2.111).

In the very next scene, Henry IV uses the same analogy as Falstaff when he compares Hal’s body to farmable land. However, Henry IV uses the analogy to make the opposite claim. Rather than imagining Hal’s body as “lean, sterile, and bare land” which must be manured and tilled with drinking, he describes Hal’s body as dangerously fertile soil and claims, “Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds;/ And he, the noble image of my youth,/ Is overspread with them” (2 *Henry IV*, 4.3.54-55). This disagreement about the use of the metaphor of land demonstrates the fundamental disagreement about what Hal’s humoral body is and how it ought to be shaped. However, it also reveals that Henry IV and Falstaff share an assumption: like untilled soil at the beginning of the planting

season, Hal's body is pregnant with potential and can be farmed to produce anything that they want it to yield. Falstaff imagines himself as the farmer, watering the cold and dry earth with sack, heating Hal's elements. On the other hand, Henry IV (like Poins who wishes to protect the "good blossom" of the young servant boy from the "cankers" of Falstaff and his friends) describes himself as the gardener, struggling to pluck corrupting weeds from the overgrown, abundantly fertile earth.

Towards the end of his life, Henry IV realizes that he has failed to shape Hal into a leader. Like the jurors who ruled that Christopher Simmons was unable to regulate his emotions because of his underdeveloped brain, Henry IV is convinced that Hal is unable to control his passions because of the physiological makeup of his humoral body. Therefore, he explains to Hal's brother, Thomas, that it is his responsibility to manage Hal. Henry IV tries to convince Thomas that Hal does have many good qualities. For example, "he is gracious, if he be observed:/ He hath a tear for pity and a hand/ Open as day for melting charity" (2 *Henry IV*, 4.3.30-35). However, the humorousness of his body negates the reliability of these admirable qualities:

Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint,
As humorous as winter and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.
His temper, therefore, must be well observed. (2 *Henry IV*, 4.3.36-38)

Here, humorousness comes to stand in for unpredictability. Henry IV commands Thomas to "Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,/ When thou perceive his blood inclined to mirth" (2 *Henry IV*, 4.3.39-40). Thomas must come to know his brother's body, and be able to predict when Hal's blood is heated. However, Henry IV understands that this chiding will only have limited impact. When Hal is "moody," Henry IV encourages

Thomas to “give him line and scope,/ Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,/ Confound themselves with working” (2 *Henry IV*, 4.3.40-41). Rather than mitigate Hal’s most extreme passions, Thomas must enable Hal’s moody fits, but carefully observe them. Henry IV imagines Hal’s passion as a leviathan, a force that cannot be directly confronted, which, left to its own resources, will use up all of Hal’s bodily humors and tire itself out.

Henry IV’s belief that Hal is entirely unable to control his passions is particularly disturbing because, in the early modern period, rational self-control was considered the most important quality of leadership. Susan James makes the connection between “advice books” of the seventeenth century and the “broader preoccupation in early modern European culture with the relations between knowledge and control, whether of self or others” (2). Often addressed to noblemen, the books instruct the reader on ways to “control his own passions so that he does not . . . forfeit his subjects’ loyalty by doing something unjust while he is in a rage” and to “be able to read and manipulate the passions of those around him, to detect and play on the ambition, envy, fear, or esteem of courtiers, counselors, and citizens” (James 3). For example, Thomas Elyot recommends that fathers must be diligent in keeping their sons “in continual exercise” so that they can be prepared for a political life. In *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* Wright similarly argues that “the doctrine of the passions is really concerned with methods of control over self, others, and ultimately, the state” (Paster “Humoring the Body,” 6).

Hal at Happy Hour

In his soliloquy in *1 Henry IV*, Hal asserts that he has a clearly defined royal selfhood, which he imagines as the sun. He imagines himself so fully in control of his

humoral body that he is able to put on a successful performance, convincing his family, friends, and future subjects that he is made of the same humoral stuff as his Eastcheap cohort. However, by the time he returns in *2 Henry IV*, Hal has begun to question whether his performance has stopped being a performance. Is the notion that he has of himself as the royal sun, falsely hidden behind common clouds actually compatible with his humoral body?

Hal enters the stage for the first time in *2 Henry IV* in the middle of a casual debate with Poins about whether or not to stop in a bar for a drink. To have a beer or not to have a beer? That is the question. Out of context, this is not a terribly significant moment. However, for an audience familiar with the earlier plays of the Henriad, Hal's pontificating about drinking comes as a shock. The last time Hal appeared on the stage, he was the man Vernon described as an ideal modest prince:

He made a blushing cital of himself
And chid his truant youth with such grace
As if he mastered there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly. (*1 Henry IV* 5.2.60-63)

The Hal who impresses Vernon certainly seems to be entirely divorced from the young man who his father describes as his "unthrifty son" (*Richard II* 5.2.1). He is no longer the Hal who frequented taverns with Poins and played tricks on Falstaff. On the plain of Shrewsbury, Hal's body is fundamentally altered. Vernon describes an abstracted Hal who has had an altercation with his body's old truant desires and taken agency over them.⁶

The extent to which Hal has remade himself as a modest, self-aware leader can be

⁶ OED defines chid as "To complain aloud against (so later, *to chide against*); to quarrel or dispute angrily *with*; to have altercation *with*"

seen when Hal enters the last scene of *1 Henry IV* fresh from the battlefield with Hotspur's blood hot on his hands. He calmly doles out war prisoners and prepares to return to fight the Welsh alongside his father. Hal, his family, and the audience all have every reason to believe Vernon's assumption: "England never did owe so sweet a hope,/ So much misconstrued in his wantonness" (*1 Henry IV* 5.2.67-68).

What has happened to Hal between the last scene of *1 King Henry IV* and the first scene of *2 King Henry IV*? How can the audience reconcile this princely Hal of Shrewsbury with the wild Hal who returns to the wantonness of Eastcheap? Who is Hal, really? Is he the imbalanced body that his father describes "As humorous as winter, and as sudden/ As flaws congealed in the spring of day," or is he England's sweet hope?

This is the question Hal seriously contemplates while deciding whether or not to indulge in happy hour with his drinking buddies. In his opening line, he describes the weakened state of his body, telling Poins that he is "exceeding weary" (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.1). In this period, weariness frequently connotes an admirable "seriousness of purpose" (Trevor 48). However, Poins reads Hal's weariness as a sign of physical weakness rather than spiritual seriousness. Sleep and waking, along with exercise and rest, are among the Galenic "non-naturals" that one can regulate to control health and temperance (Floyd-Wilson, "English Mettle" 133). Hal's discussion of exhaustion is an admission of an imbalance. Poins asks Hal, "Is't come to that? I had thought weariness durst not have attached one of so high blood" (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.2). Poins believes that Hal's royal body should be humorally incompatible with the exhaustion. Hal agrees with Poins but admits, "Faith, it does me; though it discolors the complexion of my greatness to acknowledge it" (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.5). Here, Hal discusses the fragility of his new identity. He has already

established greatness in his complexion, defined by the OED as “the combination of the four humours of the body.” However, the very acknowledgement of his own exhaustion discolours the complexion, changing the ideal balance of his princely body.

Hal’s next question reveals his own doubts about whether he really has been able to “chide his truant youth”: “Doth it not show vilely in me to desire small beer?” (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.1-6). He has not yet consumed a beer or made any other decision to materially alter his body with any change in diet. Yet, he expresses concern about the fact that he has this desire at all. What does it mean that his prince’s body wants something as vile as a beer? Like the teenage Blumberg (who resents the sudden influx of testosterone in his body) and the newly wedded Thorello (who is physically overcome with jealousy despite his attempts to fight it off), Hal’s recognition of his un-princely craving exposes the divorce between who he believes himself to be and what his body actually is. He has this clear idea of what constitutes his princely self, but the nagging needs of his material body make him question that identity.

Poins answers Hal’s question with an unabashed “yes.” He says, “Why, a prince should not be so loosely studied as to remember so weak a composition” (2 *Henry IV* 2.2.7). The weak composition that Poins refers to has a double meaning. First, he refers to the “small beer” which is a “beer of a weak, poor, or inferior quality” (OED). In *The Castell of Helthe*, Thomas Elyot recommends giving small beer to children. According to Peter Hobbey Davison, it is not undignified for Hal to desire a beer, but it is undignified to desire something of such a low quality. “[Hal’s] tone could be mildly ironic, but the dominant mood is one of self-disgust” (Davidson 534). However, Poins simultaneously refers to the composition of Hal’s weak, imbalanced humoral body which desires the

beer. Poinc clearly states that this is not an appropriate desire for a prince to have.

Poinc echoes Henry IV's concern about the confusing discrepancy between Hal's royal blood (which he inherits from his father) and Hal's base desires. Hal's father asks:

Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood
And hold their level with thy princely heart? (*1 Henry IV* 3.2.12-17)

Hal also recognizes that his desires are not compatible with the humoral body he believes himself to have. He responds to Poinc's comment by explaining how this desire complicates the way he has intentionally fashioned himself:

Belike then my appetite was not princely got; for, by my troth, I do now remember the poor creature, small beer. But, indeed, these humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.12-14)

By claiming that this craving makes him "out of love with his greatness," he suggests that his greatness is not an essential part of him. Instead, he constructs his greatness as he constructs the "unyoked humour" of his friends; as he is able to put on and take off idleness, he is able to put on and take off greatness. Throughout the play, he has claimed that he is able to perform his humoral makeup in any way that he chooses and that he is in control of the performance. However, the craving for beer is not a performance. Instead, he is shocked to find that he is unable to perform in a way that is contrary to his bodily desires. He describes his appetite as something that is out of his control. Like Hotspur, whose rationality is prevented by his spleen, and Christopher Simmons, whose morality is limited by his adolescent prefrontal cortex, Hal recognizes that he is limited by and subjected to his body. Since his physical urge does not belong in the body of a

prince, is he really a prince?

Hal's relapse exposes his chameleon nature and the inconstancies of his humoral body. The audience knows that the phlegmatic Falstaff will drink the beer every time he is able to and that choleric Hotspur will never be so idle as to drink a beer with the likes of Poins. However, neither his friends, the audience, nor Hal can confidently predict whether or not Hal will have a beer until he actually does. Shakespeare refuses to answer Doll Tearsheet's question, "what humour is the prince of?" Hal recognizes that others' inability to know what form his "humour" will take makes them uneasy, and he is able to use this unpredictability to his advantage when he finally becomes king.

Hal's Constructed Kingly Body

After Hal's father dies, Canterbury describes Hal as a humorally changed man. He describes the moment of Henry IV's death as one of Hal's material transformation:

At that very moment
Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a paradise,
To envelop and contain celestial spirits. (*Henry V* 1.1.29-33)

According to Canterbury, Hal's body had always had the potential to be a humoral paradise for good spirits. However, before his father's death it had been possessed by corrupting vapors. Rather than crediting Hal for taking part in his own reformation, Canterbury's account gives "consideration," the external spiritual force, agency over Hal's body. Even when he becomes king, Hal still does not want to be perceived as a container of "celestial spirits" ruled by "consideration." He recognizes that he can gain true power over his subjects and opponents, not by becoming the perfectly humorally balanced man like Jonson's Crites, but by masking and manipulating the ways that others

perceive his humoral state. He does not give anyone the advantage of being able to reliably diagnose his personality and therefore predict what his actions will be. For example, after receiving the insulting gift of tennis balls from the Dauphin's messenger, he explodes with a passionate tirade, not acting as a man who has (or is) a body filled with celestial spirit, but as a man who must constantly repress his urges. He first asserts, "We are no tyrant, but a Christian king," but clarifies this claim by describing the extent to which he has control over his passions: "Our passion is as subject/ As are our wretches fettered in our prisons" (*Henry V* 1.1.241-243). Rather than claiming, "I do not have intense, furious, dangerous passions," he says, "I am as full of passions as a prison is of criminals, but I am able to control them." He is not "consideration" embodied; he is a kettle about to boil over.

Before his death, Henry IV prematurely mourns for his nation which he is certain will be destroyed by the unpredictable Hal. He laments:

For when his headstrong riot hath no curb,
When rage and hot blood are his counsellors,
When means and lavish manners meet together,
O, with what wings shall his affections fly
Towards fronting peril and opposed decay! (2 King Henry IV 4.3.62-66)

This account of Hal's humoral state is radically different from Canterbury's. According to his father, rage is more likely to have agency over Hal's body than consideration.

However, Hal soon proves that positioning himself as an unpredictable, humorally unstable man with passions (which can, at any moment, become a monstrous whale) makes his threats more meaningful and his power more absolute. At the gates of Harfleur, he threatens the town governor with nightmarish brutality, claiming that he will allow his "soldiers, rough and hard of heart" to rape and pillage the town, "mowing like

grass/ Your fresh fair virgins and your flow'ring infants" (*Henry V* 3.3.88-93). He rhetorically asks, "What rein can hold licentious wickedness/ When down the hill he holds his fierce career?" (3.3.99-100). He suggests that the Governor must act quickly before Hal loses control of both the wickedness of the war heated bodies of his men, and the passions of his own body. He urges,

Take pity of your town and of your people
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command,
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
Of heady murder, spoil, and villainy. (3.3.105-109)

If the Governor truly believes that Hal is "no tyrant, but a Christian king," he will not take these horrific threats so seriously. Instead, the Governor cannot be sure whether or not Hal will allow his soldiers to rape virgins and throw the heads of infants upon pikes like Herod's army. Hal may be a manipulative performer who is ultimately in full control of his humoral state. Or Hal may truly be susceptible to the always changing passions that can change their course as fast as the winds of grace. In fact, no one, not even Hal, can reliably predict how he will act. This deeply unsettling uncertainty is what encourages the Governor to surrender without a fight.

Throughout the rest of the play, he continues to make unpredictable and frequently contradictory decisions. For example, he pardons the drunk man who threatens to kill him but allows his old Boar's Head companion, Bardolph, to be hung for stealing a "pax" from a church. He insists that the French be treated with justice, claiming, "When lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner" (*Henry V* 3.6.102), but orders every soldier to kill his French prisoners. These decisions do not seem to come from the same man. What makes the shock value so successful is that so

many characters are confident that they really know Hal. Most famously, Falstaff is completely convinced that he knows Hal even after Hal accuses him of being “the feeder of my riots” and banishes him “on pain of death.” Falstaff tries to comprehend this sudden change in his friend and explains, to Master Shallow, “this that you/heard was but a colour” (2 *Henry IV* 5.5.85). He assumes that Hal is only performing, as he has seen Hal do so many times before. He assumes that Hal will return to being the friend he knows once he is away from his royal family. However, Falstaff is wrong about his ability to predict Hal and dies questioning how well he ever knew the prince that he thought was his friend.

Shakespeare opens the question about how well Falstaff knows Hal as early as the second act of *I Henry IV*. After playing a trick on Falstaff, Poins, and Hal reveal that they had been the robbers. Trying to save face, Falstaff falsely claims: “By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye.” This is a complicated claim, because it is both a lie and a truth. Of course, Falstaff did not recognize Hal during his robbery and he lies to undermine his own humiliation. However, Falstaff’s claim (that he knows Hal “as well as he that made ye”) reveals what Falstaff believes to be a truth: he knows Hal. He feels real affection for the young man and describes Hal in very endearing terms. For example, he tells Hal “thou hast the most unsavoury similes and art indeed/ the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince” (1 *Henry IV* 1.2.71-72). Heart-wrenchingly, he calls Hal “my sweet boy” and “my heart” moments before Hal responds with his fateful “I know thee not, old man” (2 *Henry IV* 5.5.41-45). Only after the close of the play does Falstaff fully realize that he was never able to predict Hal any better than he was able to recognize Hal’s face in the pitch-blackness after the mock robbery. Falstaff is always looking at a

figure in the dark, allowing the faculties of his own retroactive, phlegmatic, and sack-altered imagination to fill in the blanks.

While in the process of mourning for Falstaff as he dies after being sent away by Hal, Nim makes an odd remark: “The king is a good king: but it must be as it may;/ he passes some humors and careers.” Nim, who uses his humors to justify even his most mundane actions, does not pretend to be able to understand the humors of the prince. As Nim explains, Hal has his moods and his ways. They are what they are; any attempt to predict them or define them will always prove futile. While Hotspur’s choler and Falstaff’s phlegm gives each a sense of identity and consistency, the only reliable aspect of Hal’s humor is that it is always a source of anxiety for Hal, the characters who interact with him, and any audience who attempts to humorally classify him.

CHAPTER FOUR

“TWIXT TWO EXTREMES OF PASSIONS”: EMOTIONAL AGENCY IN *KING*

LEAR

In 2011, the pharmaceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb released a commercial for Abilify, a prescription drug. Abilify is Aripiprazole, a chemical that binds to and activates dopamine and serotonin receptors (Lawler, Prioleau and Lewis, 612). It is prescribed to people who suffer from Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and helps the neurotransmitters process dopamine and serotonin, the brain chemicals that contribute to the ability to feel joy.

The commercial opens on a cartoon image of a smiling woman standing in the street, her hands on her hips. A voiceover states “Here is me.” Immediately, the cartoon woman looks upwards. An anxious look comes over her face as a blue umbrella falls from the sky into her hand. The voiceover continues “And here is my depression.” As the voiceover explains, “before taking Abilify, I was taking an antidepressant alone,” the cartoon umbrella becomes anthropomorphized. Angry eyes appear above the downturned arc of the umbrella, indicating a frowning face (Figure 1). Under the umbrella, it begins to rain on the cartoon woman. She holds the blinking, angry umbrella away from her body as the voiceover explains, “Most days I was able to get out from under it and carry on.” Then, the umbrella, with a force of its own, begins to violently drag her arm. She clings to the umbrella, as if blown by an invisible wind, as

the narration continues, “But other days I still struggled with my depression. I was handling it, but sometimes it still dragged me down” (Figure 2). Meanwhile, the depression umbrella transforms into a depression hole in the ground. The cartoon woman falls into the hole, looking frightened. She then stands in the hole (which still has uncanny, blinking, animated eyes) while the voiceover says, “I’d been feeling stuck for a long time.” A cartoon doctor in a white coat walks towards the woman and helps her step out of the hole as the narration continues, “So, I talked to my doctor and she added Abilify to my antidepressant and said it could help with my depression.” Simultaneously, the depression hole transforms back into a depression umbrella, but now it is collapsed and stands on the ferrule. Its eyes are on the handle. The cartoon woman looks down at it condescendingly. It is still present but is no longer a vicious force. Instead it is a passive, almost affectionate looking animated object (Figure 3). For the remainder of the commercial, the cartoon doctor explains the many side effects of Abilify while the woman and her depression umbrella sit side by side taking notes (the pencil magically hovering above the umbrella’s handle). In the final scene, the doctor voice continues to narrate as the woman, her husband and her daughter all cheerfully pick apples in a sunny field while the depression umbrella leans against a tree (Figure 4). Even in happy moments of blissful apple-picking, the depression umbrella is constantly present, ready to regain power.



Figure 1. Still of anthropomorphized umbrella from *Abilify*



Figure 2. Still of struggle with depression from *Abilify*



Figure 3. Still of pacified depression umbrella from *Abilify*



Figure 4. Still of final scene from still from *Abilify*

Obviously, the most bizarre and memorable aspect of this commercial is the “depression umbrella” character. Bristol-Myers Squibb introduced two other similar characters in a series of ads: a depression balloon (which can morph into a ball and chain), and a depression bathrobe (which wraps around the cartoon woman as she wakes up in the morning and follows her, floating like a bed-sheet ghost). Clearly, these are metaphors for depression; however, in order for the story to make sense, the cartoon woman must also be a metaphor. She comes to represent the cogent, reasoning woman who is influenced by, but exists outside of, the depression. Sadness, tension, suicidal thought, pessimism and all of the other affective experiences associated with depression are depicted as an object which is visually distinct from the rational, controlled self. For a person suffering from depression, this visual metaphor can be empowering. It enables one to say, “The way my brain chemistry functions does not necessarily dictate who I am. I am not my depression.” However, the commercial simultaneously creates the troubling image of depression as a force with its own agency and agenda. The umbrella is able to physically move and alter the cartoon woman; emotion is able to overcome the woman’s rationality. After she physically changes the

way that her body produces brain chemicals by taking the Abilify, the relationship the cartoon woman has with the depression umbrella changes; the reasoning woman is able to regain agency. Yet, as the presence of the umbrella in the final scene picnic scene demonstrates, reason and depression are only able to exist within the context of their relationship. They constantly engage in a struggle, one attempting to assert physical force over the other.

The fact that a major pharmaceutical company built a national advertising campaign upon these metaphors, reveals a turn in the way that we articulate the relationship between emotion and identity. The commercial claims that when the depressed body is unmedicated, the umbrella has control; when Abilify changes the ways that the neurotransmitters process dopamine and serotonin, the reasoning woman is in control. In order to make this claim, the advertisers must assume that their audience accepts that the material makeup of the body determines whether reason or passion can have agency. The self is not the depression caused by an influx of brain chemicals nor the rational cognition which goes to battle with this depression. Instead, the self is both the woman and the umbrella; identity is defined by the relationship between reason, or intentional cognition, and passion, or “the pre-individual bodily forces, linked to autonomic responses” (Clough and Halley 316).

In one of the most memorably disturbing scenes of *King Lear*, Shakespeare’s villainous Cornwall uses a comparable pair of metaphors to make a claim about the agency of his passion. Moments before gouging out Gloucester’s eyes, he pauses to rationally explain the relationship between his reason and his wrath. In describing this relationship, he explains, “our power/ Shall do a curtsy to our wrath, which men/ May

blame, but not control” (14.23-25). His “power,” his ability to reason, takes on human characteristics. It becomes a submissive being that is forced to bend to wrath, like the Abilify cartoon woman being dragged by the unmanageable, angry depression umbrella. His personified wrath, like the depression umbrella, can now be imagined in material terms. In other words, Cornwall claims, “Here is me, and here is my wrath.” They are distinct entities and one is able to exercise agency over the other. I will return to discuss how Shakespeare complicates and undermines Cornwall’s claim about the agency of passion. However, Cornwall’s description of reason curtsying to wrath indicates that Shakespeare and his original audience were familiar with the narrative that the Abilify commercial uses: reason and passion are material essences battling for agency inside of a malleable body.

In the world of *King Lear* (characterized by eclipses and violent storms), a multitude of individual passions act as driving forces within the characters’ humoral bodies. Each passion has a real, terrifying ability to determine how the body will behave. However, the passions do not only go to war with reason or higher faculties in the body battleground. Instead they contradict one another, physically pulling the body in multiple and confused directions. In this chapter I will continue my discussion of the relationship between identity and the material body by focusing specifically on moments of high emotional conflict in *King Lear*. Concern with the agency of the passions is most evident in the moments when characters are simultaneously altered by more than one humoral change. I will argue that Shakespeare places particular emphasis on the moments when characters’ bodies betray them and they go to battle with passions that they do not want to feel. He uses these emotionally complicated moments

to engage with the early modern discourse about the passions and question the notion of human agency.

Throughout *King Lear*, the ability to manage, or override, the passions of the humoral body and the undesirable impulses produced by the body, determines the extent to which one is able to maintain both sanity and humanity. The danger of the passions and the desperate need to manage them is a central theme of many of the most canonical readings of the play. This critical focus emerged from the Romantics' interest in the individual's experience and expression of emotion. "In early-nineteenth-century, British criticism of tragedy seriously competed with the epic for the first place among the poetic genres, and *Lear*'s high position among tragedies seems to have been undisputed... The admirers of *Lear* agreed that passion has a unique importance in tragedy" (Albrecht, 611). Charles Lamb's reading of *Lear* exemplifies this belief. He claims "the greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimensions, but in intellectual; the explosions of his passions are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that rich sea, his mind, with all its vast riches" (359). William Hazlitt expands this argument:

The passion which [Shakespeare] has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart; of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed; and the canceling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of our being, ... this is what Shakespeare has given. (118)

W. H. Clemen valorizes passion, claiming that what distinguishes Lear from the evil characters (Edmund, Gonoril, Regan and Cornwall) is his ability to "feel." The villains are "calculating, cool, unimaginative people" who speak "rationally" while Lear

undergoes intense “inner drama” and conflict. Therefore, his struggle with his passion is the very act that keeps Lear moral and human.

J.B. Bamborough, who was among the first scholars to examine the relationship between Shakespeare’s drama and physiology by focusing on Galenic humoralism and “setting out the psychological theory that was current when Shakespeare wrote” (11), agrees with the romantics that passions are central to *King Lear*. However, the passions that Bamborough defines in the terms of the Renaissance discourse of the body are not the intrinsically immaterial and awe inspiring emotions that the romantics exalt. Instead, he claims that they are corporeal forces. In fact, he argues, “Many Elizabethans had difficulty even thinking of an immaterial substance” (30). He introduces his reading of *King Lear* with this historical definition of passions and discusses their potential danger. He claims that Lear is the archetypical Shakespearian tragic hero who follows the same path as all of Shakespeare’s tragic characters except Hamlet and Julius Caesar (11). The tragic hero is always engaged in the battle between reason and passion: “Evil enters the mind of the hero in the shape of a passion; the passion grows until it overcomes the Reason; in consequence the hero sins, or at least behaves irrationally; finally retribution overtakes his sin. It is a perfect formula for tragedy” (148).

Harold C. Goddard poetically expands upon these earlier arguments about the centrality of passions in the play:

The predestined end of unmastered passion is the suicide of the species. That is the gospel according to *King Lear*. The play is in no small measure an actual representation of that process. The murder-suicide of Regan-Gonoril is an example. But it is more than a picture of chaos and impending doom, What is the remedy for chaos? it asks. What can avert the doom? The characters who have mastered their passions give us a glimpse of the answer to those questions... He who masters his passions

is king over them. Here the psychological theme of the play has its political implications. The metaphor of the emotions as a mob bound to dethrone its ruler if he loses control over them goes nobody knows how far back toward the beginnings of human thought. This comparison of the kingdom within to the kingdom without, of the microcosm to the macrocosm, is one of the immemorial and universal figures of speech. Plato founded his Republic on it. Jesus erected his Kingdom of Heaven on an extension and sublimation of it. Shakespeare evinced the keenest interest in it from the beginning. (13)

For Goddard, this powerful image of the emotions as a mob imagines passion not as a unitary force, but as a myriad of separate forces ready to strike. In one of his most cited critical claims, Goddard expands upon this metaphor: “The greatest poetry has always depicted the world as a little citadel of nobility threatened by an immense barbarism, a flickering candle surrounded by infinite night” (335). He goes on to explain that it is not necessarily the villains who are the barbarians and the heroes who are the threatened noble citadels. Instead, this epic battle of light and darkness can be staged inside the hero’s body. The passions become the barbaric, natural, dark, uncultivated and dangerous forces, and the ability to reason becomes the flickering illumination. Shakespeare fills *King Lear* with descriptions of passions as rebellious forces and expresses concern about what happens when passions win the battle and overcome the citadel of temperance, taking full control over the actions of the body.

Of all the scenes in Shakespeare’s canon, the discussion about the ability to control contrasting passions is most didactically laid out in scene 17 of the 1608 Quarto text of *The History of King Lear*¹. The scene opens with the disguised Kent asking a

¹ Scene 17 is the only full scene that appears only in the Q1 text. It is edited out, in its entirety, from the Folio. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the critical debate surrounding the controversial claim that the scene (or any other) was “edited out.” I will also discuss the implication of this edit on my reading of the play.

gentleman from the French court to describe Cordelia's reaction to his letters about the horrific treatment of her father and the torture of Gloucester at the hands of her sisters. He wants to know, "Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?" (17:10).²

The gentleman replies to Kent's question with a detailed first-hand account of watching Cordelia respond to the letters. He reports:

Ay, sir. she took them, read them in my presence,
And now and then an ample tear trilled down
Her delicate cheek. It seemed she was a queen
Over her passion who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her. (17.12-16)

Safe in France with her loving husband, Cordelia has been removed from the violence and despair which the other characters directly witnessed since her sudden forced exile. The letters abruptly and brutally shatter her reality. The gentleman is able to watch her physical body change as the letter's meaning ignites the passions in her body. Notably, Kent does not question the Gentleman's ability to credibly describe Cordelia's state of passion, especially since Cordelia is famously unable and unwilling to describe her own passion. After all, her inability to communicate her interiority set the tragic plot in motion: "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave/ My heart into my mouth" (1.80). Regan and Gonoril have no such difficulty. Both sisters use distinctly humoral terms, describing the inner working of their bodies, as evidence of their proclaimed love. Gonoril describes "A love that makes breath poor and speech unable," expressing the

² Unless otherwise noted, all quotations will be taken from the quarto text, *The History of King Lear*, which includes two scenes that will be central to my argument and are not in the folio. I will refer to the play as *King Lear* when making claims that could be true of either the Q or F texts. I cite the second edition of *The Norton Shakespeare*, adopted from the text established by *The Oxford Shakespeare*.

physical restraints that such overabundant love places on her body (1.53). Regan follows declaring, “Sir, I am made/ Of the self-same mettle that my sister is” (1.60-61). She claims her love to be humorally equal and the materials of her affective body to be identical to her sister’s. Of course, it soon becomes evident that their own descriptions of their humoral bodies are false.³

As I will discuss later in the chapter, throughout the play Shakespeare encourages the audience to be skeptical when characters make self-proclamations about the power of their own passions. However, the Gentleman bases his claims about Cordelia’s interiority on something more concrete than words: her tears. By examining her external face, the gentleman is able to read what is happening to her interior body.⁴ The gentleman’s report about Cordelia’s passions becomes more credible than her own description of her love. He introduces the audience to a less coldly inexpressive and more conflicted, complicated, and passionate woman.

Although the Gentleman is apparently in the position to closely examine her face, which should give him reliable information, he struggles while reporting about Cordelia’s reaction because, as he explains, it defies his expectations. When Kent asks him “O, then it moved her” (17.17), he begins his answer with, “Not to a rage”

³ Ironically, both sisters prove to be overabundantly passionate and humorally overheated by love. However, their love is not the filial devotion that they claim but sexual desire for Edmund. When the dagger that Gonoril plunged into her heart is brought out onto the stage, it literally steams with the heat of her unbalanced body: “It’s hot, it smokes” (24.218).

⁴ Michael Holahan notes that this scene is structured much like the reporting scenes in the late romances include *Pericles*, 1.4; *Cymbeline*, 1.1, 2.4, and 5.3; and *The Winter’s Tale*, 1.1 and 5.2. (Holahan, 414, n. 24).

(17.18).⁵ This suggests that both he and Kent expected Cordelia to express an obvious rage upon learning such atrocious news. Certainly, Kent has seen enough examples of others being moved to a rage; Kent criticized Lear for becoming irrationally enraged by Cordelia's refusal to amend her love speech. Michael Holahan draws a direct connection between Lear's surprising rage and Cordelia's surprising lack of rage:

Here the power of her subjectivity is so well controlled that, in governing itself, it can lay claim to govern others, this unnamed gentleman or a would-be king of passion. The masculine title of "king" suggests that the implicit model may be Lear's earlier usurping rage. A gentle microcosm suddenly takes shape in Cordelia's rich sorrow, as if Act 3's storm should be replayed now in precious miniature. (415)

The Gentleman goes on to describe his difficulty reading Cordelia's face. He begins by telling Kent that Cordelia was crying; however, he immediately notes that the meaning of her tears needs further clarification. He cannot confidently define the reaction that he witnesses so he uses an elaborate metaphor to describe not how her face *was*, but how it "*seemed*" (17.14).⁶

Using the language of warfare, the Gentleman creates a complicated narrative about the internal, private, invisible, happenings within Cordelia's body: "It seemed she was a queen/ Over her passion who, most rebel-like,/ Sought to be king o'er her."

Notably, he defines the invisible force that changes her as "her passion," indicating that

⁵ *The Oxford Shakespeare* editors punctuate this passage with a period after her. However, the way that the Gentleman responds with a clear answer about how she was moved suggests that Kent had asked it as a question. Kent inquires, "Did it stir her passions? Is her body noticeably humorally different as a result of this letter?" He is assuming that her tears are a sign of either melancholy or choler, two humoral states that can be clearly defined and have overcome other characters throughout the play.

⁶ My emphasis.

this passion belongs to Cordelia. However, Cordelia's passion acts with an agency that is not only distinctly its own, but directly counters Cordelia's natural state. Her passion becomes a dangerous rebel who seeks "to be king o'er her." This is a complex claim which raises important questions about Cordelia's identity: What can it mean for Cordelia's own passions to go to war with Cordelia? What/who is the "Cordelia" that her own passions attempt to master? What aspect of this Cordelia is able to be "queen over" these violent passions?

We can better understand how Shakespeare opens up these questions about identity with descriptions of contrasting passions by comparing the Gentleman's report to a similar report from *Antony and Cleopatra*. Like scene 17 of *The History of King Lear*, the central drama in 1.5 of *Antony and Cleopatra* involves a messenger reporting a first hand account of another character's affective response to a letter. In this scene, Cleopatra's servant Alexas reports about the face of her lover, Antony. Unlike Kent, who specifically asks the gentleman if the letter led to a "demonstration of grief," Cleopatra is less confident about what type of affection to expect; she asks Alexas "What, was he sad or merry?" (1.5.50). Alexas' reply, like the Gentleman's, surprises all expectations: he was neither. Comparing Antony to the spring, Alexas explains, "Like to the time o'th' year between the extremes/ Of hot and cold, he was nor sad nor merry" (1.5.54-55). Cleopatra is delighted by this answer, exclaiming "O well divided disposition!" (1.5.56). She explains how he was able to strategically and intentionally manage his passions for political purposes:

He was not sad, for he would shine on those
That make their looks by his; he was not merry,
Which seemed to tell them his remembrance lay

In Egypt with his joy; but between both:
 O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,
 The violence of either thee becomes;
 So does it no man else. (1.5.54-60)

Notably, she describes how he is able to rationally control the passions, not how the passions influence his reason: He was able to prevent any passion from overcoming his reason because he knew that his passions could influence the passions of others. This implies that, like Cordelia, Antony's reason remains sovereign. However, Cleopatra then immediately notes that "the violence" of either sadness or joy can suit him. Jan H. Blit points out that Cleopatra is not championing Antony's temperance. Instead, Blit argues, Cleopatra describes a clashing of extremes:

This is the only time Cleopatra praises Anthony (or anyone else) for moderation. Anthony will later say that although she can guess what it should be, Cleopatra does not know what moderation is (3.13.126-27). Here, proving him right, she gets it wrong. Where Alexas, sounding like an old-fashioned Roman, explicitly spoke of Anthony's avoiding extremes, Cleopatra, although initially claiming that he was "between both," quickly shifts and takes him to mean that Anthony combined rather than avoided both ("mingle"). "Between both" comes to mean not free from, but simultaneously subject to, both. Anthony's disposition is "well-divided" only because it is torn by the power of conflicting extremes... What Cleopatra praises as Anthony's moderation is the violence of clashing excesses in disguise. (47)

In humoral terms, this paradoxical mixture of opposites, or "mingle," is not a peaceful management of passions; it is a violent warfare.

Shakespeare's language of the rebellious, autonomous passions in these two scenes closely mirrors imagery commonly used in the early modern treatises and pamphlets on the passions. In his 1603 treatise, *Virtues Common-wealth*, Henry Crosse describes the passions as "many enemies" which, without temperance, "would creepe in, and infect our best parts, and utterly ruinate and cast downe the bulwarke of reason,

and walls of understanding” (C3v). He consistently describes passions as multiple forces that go to battle with reason. Even when he describes the dangers of a single type of passion, such as lust, he is not concerned with a single lust, but many lusts. He claims, “our lusts would overthrowe our understanding, and the body rebell against all good order, and the habit of reason wholly suppressed” (C3v). In *The Passions of the Minde in General* Wright similarly describes passions as insurgent subjects, the soul as the commonwealth that they disturb, and reason as the monarch:

By two wayes the subjects of every Common-weale, usually disturbe the State, and breede civill broyles therein: The first is, when they rise up and rebel against their King: the second is when they brawle, one with another, and so cause riots and tumults: the former is called Rebellion, the later sedition. After the same manner, Passions either rebel against Reason their Lord and King, or oppose themselves one against another, that I call contradiction this contrarietie. The former he well understood, that said, *Spiritus concupiscit aduersus carnem, & caro aduersus Spiritum*: The Spirit affects against the Flesh, & the Flesh against the Spirit. This internal Combat and spirituall Contradiction, every spirituall man daily perceiveth, for inordinate passions, will he, nill he, cease not almost hourelly to rise up against Reason, and so molest him, troubling the rest and quietness of his Soul. (F2v)

In Wright’s depiction of the constant internal warfare between passions and reason, the passions are essences that are both part of the soul and a danger to it. In *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* Schoenfeldt describes these hostile passions as “physiological double agents” which “threaten the fragile constructions of the self, both by direct assault and by a kind of sabotage” (49). He claims that this battle between the passions and the constructed self is “a warfare... that is constructive rather than destructive of the self, both because of the radical inwardness such introspection demands and because the battle prevents the self from being overrun by a series of undifferentiated passions” (50). Schoenfeldt cites Wright’s analogy to support his

reading of book 2 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which allegorizes the virtue of temperance. In this episode of the epic, violent passions must challenge reason in order for the virtue of temperance to be active. Ultimately, Schoenfeldt argues that "what individuates humans is not their desires but their successes at battling this internal usurpation by desire... [In Spenser's universe] self-control is the vehicle for self-rule and finally for freedom" (49-50). Schoenfeldt's interpretation of Wright is extremely effective in the context of his thesis about Spenser's battle at the castle of Alma. However, the battle Cordelia undergoes, as it is described by the Gentleman, is not necessarily "constructive of the self" nor does it become "a vehicle for freedom." Instead, the very notion of "self" is challenged by the battle. Cordelia's "self" is not defined by either her reason or her passion. Instead, the ways in which both interact and manifest themselves in her body defines her identity. As the reason and passion become increasingly hostile, her body is physically pulled in many directions and her sense of self is equally malleable and unstable. As the gentleman describes, Cordelia's reason remains intact at the end of this particular battle, but, as we will see over the course of the play, many other characters lose similar battles with the direst of consequences.

According to Wright, rebelling passions take two separate forms: "rebellion" and "sedition." After the Gentleman explains how the passions rebel, seeking "to be king o'er her," he then goes on to describe the passions' sedition:

Patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
Were like. (17.17-20)

She does not experience a unified rebellion, but instead multiple and conflicting

passions. In Wright's terms, this sedition causes passions to "brawle, one with another" and "cause riots and tumults." Cordelia's indecipherable emotional response to the letters is certainly not what Kent expected. The information about the horrific events which were destroying her family and her homeland ought to visibly move her. One would expect an intense choler to overwhelm her body like a tempest. Her tears may be appropriate. However, what do her "smiles" represent? Her father has been sent out naked in a fierce storm. Her sisters have turned murderous. A blinded Gloucester wanders around the countryside searching for a king who is mad. In this seemingly apocalyptic moment, why do her passions "rain" and not storm? One may have seen sunshine and rain at once, but never simultaneous sunshine and cyclone. What role can sunshine possibly play in such a dark reality? How can patience stand a chance against sorrow of this magnitude?

Elsewhere in the play, Shakespeare depicts grief as a powerful, monolithic passion. What the gentleman describes is a much more complicated experience. Patience and sorrow both act with an individual agency that is independent of Cordelia's body. Wright describes the effects that this simultaneous experience of multiple passions can have on the body when the passions do not only collectively go to war against the monarch of reason, but separately go to war against one another, striving to dominate her humoral state, or "express her goodliest":

The Egyptians fought against the Egyptians, the East wind riseth often against the West, the South against the North, the Winde against the Tyde, and one Passion fighteth with another. The cholericke Cavalliere would with death revenge an injurie, but feare of killing or hanging opposeth it self against this Passion. Gluttony would have dainties, but Covetousness prescribeth parsimonie. Lecherie would raigne and dominier, but dreadfulnessse of infamie, and fear of diseases draw in the

raynes of this inordinate Affection. By which opposition we may easily perceive how unquiet is the heart of a passionate man, tossed like the Sea with contrary winds, even at the same time and moment. (F4r)

Cordelia is temporarily halted in a state of indecision and lacks control. The gentleman goes on to use a second description to try to describe her conflicted passionate state in “a better way” (17.20).

Those happy smilets
That played on her ripe lip seemed not to know
What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropped. (17.20-23)⁷

The Gentleman does not describe what he assumes Cordelia is feeling. Instead, he describes what her passions are doing. According to the Gentleman’s description, Cordelia doesn’t smile. Instead, the passion (represented by the smile) “played” her lip. Cordelia doesn’t cry. The tears are guests in her eyes. The individual parts of her body are working with individual passions in conflicting ways. As her features are physically altered by concurrent but distinct passions and her body becomes an instrument to be played by the passions, the system of communication within her body breaks down.

This language of many passions battling to determine which “best becomes her” echoes the language Shakespeare uses in his earlier poem, *Venus and Adonis*. When

⁷ *The Oxford Shakespeare* editors punctuate these lines differently: “her smiles and tears/ Were like, a better way. Those happy smilets/ That played on her ripe lip seemed not to know/ What guests were in her eyes.” I take the punctuation quoted above from Leslie Brisman, who convincingly argues for a reading first proposed by Henry Norman Hudson. Since Q₁ gives only a comma after “way” and Q₂ has the whole line unpunctuated, some form of editorial punctuation is required. Brisman notes that editors normally associate the phrase “a better way” with the clause before but this reading adds nothing to the sense of the simile. “The Gentleman is trying to describe Cordelia’s reaction to news of her father, and it is especially appropriate that difficulty in expression be associated with the character who stands for the inability to translate emotion into words -or, to put it “a better way”, the character who stands for the inexpressibility of human feeling and the fact that language necessarily belies the heart” (205).

Venus beholds the dead body of her beloved Adonis, she is overcome with intense grief. To explain the nature of her grief, Shakespeare uses the same analogy of the irrational coexistence of sunshine and rain to describe the actions of the many distinct passions that contribute to it.

But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,
Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.
Variable passions throng her constant woe,
As striving who should best become her grief.
All entertained, each passion labours so,
That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
But none is best. Then join they all together,
Like many clouds consulting for foul weather. (968-972)

Grief is not a single experience that Venus must endure. Instead, grief becomes a conglomerate of many separate, warring passions that simultaneously have their own contrasting agencies over her body. Each individual passion labors with its own force so that “every present sorrow seemeth chief” to the suffering Venus. Like the clouds of a storm, the passions congregate, but each batters her with its own force. As her passions become the storm clouds, her body becomes the land that the storm thrashes. Her Goddess form becomes humoral and materially human as it is overwhelmed by passions which are manifest in bodily responses.

The image of sunshine peaking through storm clouds was frequently used to describe the experience of grieving women in early modern writing, and is a notable trope in Sidney’s *Arcadia*, which is commonly considered a source text of *King Lear*. Kenneth Muir notes that that Shakespeare borrows the language of Sidney’s description of the mourning Philoclea in book three for his description of Cordelia in scene 17. In *Arcadia* Cecropia walks in on Philoclea crying in her chamber:

She saw Philoclea sitting low upon a cushion in such a given-over manner, that one would have thought silence, solitariness, and melancholy were come there under the ensign of mishap, to conquer delight, and drive him from his natural seat of beauty: her tears came dropping down like rain in sunshine, and she not taking heed to wipe the tears, they hung upon her cheeks and lips as upon cherries which the dropping tree bedeweth. (329)

Like the Gentleman, who describes the passions invoked by Kent's letter as dangerous agents who engage in a "rebel like" attempt to rule Cordelia's body, the narrator of *Arcadia* describes "silence, solitariness, and melancholy" as warlike forces who battle to displace "delight." Even delight, who had reigned in "his natural seat of beauty" is described as an individual force that is personified and gendered as male, which emphasizes the distinction of "delight" from the woman, Philoclea, who "he" embodies. However, Shakespeare uses this same analogy of "sunshine and rain at once" to describe a different aspect of the warring passions than Sidney. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, Philoclea's tears "came dropping down like rain in sunshine." The sunshine is the beauty of her face; the tears are the rain drops that shine in that sunshine, making her face all the more lovely in her all encompassing despair. In Shakespeare's passage, sunshine is not Cordelia's beauty, but patience's smile. Philoclea mourns in a "given-over manner." Silence, solitariness, and melancholy have conquered delight and stolen delight's "natural seat of beauty" as an invader could drive a king from his throne. Undefined, contrasting passions similarly attempt to dethrone Cordelia, but they fail; she is never entirely overcome. Unlike Philoclea, who "not taking heed to wipe the tears, they hung upon her cheeks and lips as upon cherries" (Sidney, 329), the Gentleman describes Cordelia as she is involved in the battle with her tears.

There she shook

The holy water from her heavenly eyes
 And clamour mastered, then away she started
 To deal with grief alone. (17.30-33)

Unlike Cleopatra, who praises Antony for his ability to “mingle” the violent warring passions (1.5.63), the Gentleman commends Cordelia’s temperance. Although she cries, Cordelia does not appear to be otherwise altered by her invading passions; she maintains her composure. According to the Gentleman, what is remarkable and beautiful about Cordelia is not only her lovely face but the lack of violence and extremity in her response. Like Cleopatra, who claims that sorrow and joy “becomes” Antony, the Gentleman claims, “Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved/ If all could so become it” (17.23-24). Cordelia “becomes” the passion so perfectly because, not only does she manage to retain her status as a “queen” of passion, she “masters clamour” and “deals with grief.” Cordelia’s reason retains agency over her body’s reaction to the passions.

Katharine Goodland discusses how radically different the composed Cordelia is from the more common depictions of mourning women in early canonical English drama. She cites Webster’s *Cornelia* and Shakespeare’s *Ophelia*, claiming that these characters, like the mourning Virgin Mary of the N-Town English Passion plays, have excessive grief; women were frequently depicted as hysterical, overwhelmed, mad and dangerous in early modern drama. They mourn openly and at length while Cordelia grieves in private. According to Goodland, these staged forms of grief “denote differences in value that register the shift from ritualized, public, communal mourning to naturalized, private, individualized grief” (214). The grief, which Goodland argues emerges in Shakespeare’s works, is not only private and individual, but is also deeply

embodied. This clear difference between excessive female mourning and Cordelia's management of the passions demonstrates Shakespeare's interest in the question shared by early modern medical writers and contemporary neuroscientists: to what extent can cognition or reason control the multiple, contrasting, embodied, material affective forces?

Before discussing the ways in which Shakespeare works through this question in other moments of the play, it is important to note that scene 17 does not appear in the folio text, *The Tragedy of King Lear*. The differences between the Q and F versions are significant. Q₁ contains 285 lines not in F₁; F₁ contains around 100 lines not in Q₁. Additionally, more than a thousand individual words and speech assignments vary in the two texts, and about half the verse lines in F₁ are either printed as prose or differently divided in Q₁ (Bradley, 24). The early editors of Shakespeare's work, including Rowe and Pope, operated under the assumption that both Q and F are mangled versions of a pure original.⁸

Editors would attempt to reclaim Shakespeare's intended *Lear* by conflating the two texts, "weaving together the lines that appear in only one or the other version and correcting Q with reference to F or (in a much smaller number of instances) F with reference to Q" (Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 2333).

The development of the New Bibliography led to a new approach to the texts of *Lear*. Formative works of textual criticism, including Jerome McGann's *A Critique of*

⁸ Much of this belief in the existence of a single authoritative manuscript originates from Ben Jonson's famous claim that Shakespeare never revised his own work: "The players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out line" (Jonson, 539).

Modern Textual Criticism (1983) and D. F. McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (1986) indicated a turn to a social theory of textual criticism. McGann opens his *Critique* with a discussion of the texts of *Lear*. He describes the critical methods of editors of "eclectic" texts:

According to this line of argument, when scholars set about editing works of the past- and in particular when they are dealing with works for which we do not have an author's manuscript- they must develop methods for reconstituting the lost original document. (4)

McGann claims that this method fails if the two original printed texts of King Lear "are not two relatively corrupted texts of a pure (but now lost) original, but two relatively reliable texts of two different versions of the plays (as we now think)" (4). He goes on to argue that this rethinking of the texts of Lear creates a turning point in textual practices because, "since Shakespearean and Elizabethan studies constitutes the central field in which our theories of textual criticism seek their ground, a crisis in that field involves a general crisis of the discipline" (5). The same year that McGann published his *Critique*, Gary Taylor and Michael Warren published a collection of essays specifically discussing the relationship between the two texts of Lear, *The Division of the Kingdoms*. Steven Urkowitz describes the history of the conflated text and argues that "what has been a well-meaning quest after a quite-possibly-nonexistent lost original may have promulgated a two-hundred year usurpation of our greatest play by an adulterated text" (41). Urkowitz makes a case for the necessity of modern editions of both texts; three years later, the new Oxford *Complete Works* edited by Taylor and Stanley Wells published two separate versions of *Lear*, one based on Q₁, the other on F₁.

The contributors to *The Division of the Kingdoms* are primarily interested in

questioning the relationship between the Q and F texts. Roger Warren describes the assumption that they generally share, “the Folio cuts, additions, and rewordings represent Shakespeare’s own second thoughts as a result of difficulties at rehearsal and, perhaps, dissatisfaction with the performance” (47). Gary Taylor complicates this claim, arguing that Shakespeare revised the folio for multiple purposes. He attempts to distinguish between deliberate authoritative revisions and changes made to the text as a result of censorship. The claim that Shakespeare intentionally revised F continues to be intensely debated. Richard Knowles critiques the “frequent exaggeration found in these essays,” claiming that there is not enough evidence to support the theory that Shakespeare is the reviser of the Folio (*The Division of the Kingdoms*, 116). Shakespeare’s is likely not the only agency in the changes. For Knowles, “The question is not whether there was revision—of course there was—but who did it, and when, and why” (“Two *Lears*?” 58).

Furthermore, the question about whether a reader should consider these texts as two distinct plays remains up for debate. For example, in his *Shakespeare and Revision* (1988), Stanley Wells claims that the two texts of *Lear* represent the play “at a different stage of its evolution,” but still insists that the two versions “create, in effect, two separate plays” (15). R.A. Foakes contests his claim and asserts: “At the same time, the reworking of *King Lear* is not so thorough as to mean that we have to think of two plays” (111). In the textual notes to *The Norton Shakespeare*’s facing page version of *King Lear*, Greenblatt offers a middle ground:

Each version has its own integrity; each contains passages intrinsically its own. In addition, the Quarto may give us a precious glimpse, as the Oxford editor notes, of the play “as Shakespeare first conceived it, probably before it was performed,” while the Folio represents a revision made probably two or three years after the play was performed. The Folio, then, with its substantial cuts and

its small additions, its streamlining and its subtle shifts in emphasis, is the more theatrical text. (2333)

Michael Best agrees that each version has its own integrity but challenges the assumption about F's superior stage-worthiness. He argues:

Productions of the play vary enormously in the kinds of cuts and modifications that directors have historically made; one actor's/director's/critic's high point is another's candidate for the axe. The empirical test of production over many years argues rather against the clear superiority of the Folio text in the theater, since only those directors who have deliberately decided to produce a Folio version have followed its cuts. (4)

Scene 17 exemplifies this debate about whether F is "more theatrical." The reporting scene is not essential to the plot and it can pull the audience away from the building anxiety and drama of the impending war. However, some critics are deeply disturbed by productions that cut this scene and skeptical of any claims about Shakespeare's intent to edit it out. Muir insists that the omission of this scene is "disastrous... Cordelia has so little to say in the whole play that she needs all the help she can get" (xiv).

I agree with Muir that Cordelia becomes a less compelling character without the report about her conflicted response to Kent's letter. However, I will not go so far as to claim that cutting scene 17 irreparably damages the play. Nor do I find that that F undermines Shakespeare's central concern with the agency of contrasting passions and the physical management of them, because, at many moments in the play, Shakespeare places characters in situations in which they are paradoxically moved by passions that inhospitably contrast each other as they are physically experienced in the humoral body. One of the most notable differences between Q and F is the death of Lear. Regardless who revised F or why the revisions were made, the result of the changes to the final

scene of *The Tragedy of King Lear* specifically emphasizes the embodied struggle with the passions described in scene 17.

In both the Q and F, Lear's final entrance is devastating. The ruined old monarch stumbles onto the stage carrying the dead body of his beloved daughter. "Howl, howl, howl, howl," he yells out; words are no longer able to communicate his grief. This prompts Kent to wonder, "Is this the promised end?" (24.252-258). Q and F have few variants until Lear's last lines. In Q, Lear bends down over Cordelia's mouth, looking for some sign of life. As he leans down towards her lips, he hears nothing. He finally knows that she is dead. His language breaks down into guttural sounds: "O O O O!" (24.256). Immediately, he faints and moment later is revived, recognizes the finality of her death and dies, after delivering one final command to his humoral body, "Break, heart, I prithee, break" (24.305). His body, which has refused so many of his demands, finally obeys. In F, when Lear looks for Cordelia's breath, he is overcome with a sudden flash of hope. His final lines before his death are, "Look on her. Look, her lips. Look there, look there" (5.3.09). As he leans down towards her, Lear fleetingly believes that Cordelia still breathes. It is not overwhelming agony that kills him. Instead, he becomes overcome by the dangerous clashing of contradicting passion; Lear dies in a state of alternating despair and hope for the life of his beloved daughter. I will revisit this scene to discuss the physiology of early modern heartbreak in the next chapter, but it suffices to say that the conflict of passions is central to Lear's death scene.

Lear's death by conflicting emotion in F directly parallels the death of Gloucester who dies as a result of a similar burst of joy amid despair. After long days of patiently

caring for his ailing, blinded father, Edgar finally gives up his Poor Tom disguise and reveals himself. The result is devastating. He sorrowfully reports,

but his flawed heart—
Alack, too weak the conflict to support—
‘Twixt two extremes of passions, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly. (24.192)

Gloucester simultaneously experiences two powerful passions: the horrific grief which results from the knowledge that he had wrongly accused his son of attempted patricide and the overpowering joy of realizing that his son is not only alive and well but has been with him all along. The humoral contradiction is too strong for Gloucester’s heart to process and it literally bursts. In the amended final scene of *F*, the parallel deaths of Gloucester and Lear ultimately dramatize the decisive result of contrasting emotions.

Long before the conflicting passions cause Lear’s death, his inability to control them certainly leads to his madness. The early modern physiological explanations of madness are as complex, conflicted and extensive as the discourse surrounding humoral theory and the passions. An exploration of the medical history of madness is beyond the purview of this project.⁹ However, I want to argue that reading Lear’s madness through the lens of humoral theory turns the focus on his integrated mind and body, which becomes a battleground over which the passions and reason struggle for control. Lear describes his many individual battles with rebelling passions in distinctly humoral terms. When Lear comes upon Kent (disguised as Caius) in the stocks, he is immediately infuriated by the insubordination of Gonoril and Cornwall. In describing

⁹ For an extensive discussion of the heterogeneity of the discourse surrounding madness in early modern England, see Carol Neely’s *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*.

his anguish, he does not distinguish between his mental and physical pain. Instead, he narrates the way in which the passion changes his body. He cries, “O, how this mother swells up towards my heart!/ Histerica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow;/ Thy element’s below” (7.221-223). *Histerica passio* refers to a “suffering in the womb” or stomach (Greenblatt, 2233 n6). The stomach was considered the “seat of passion” in early modern medicine. “[According to Levinus Lemnius,] if the humours in the stomach did not function properly, then not only were harmful vapors produced that could ascend to the head and disturbe and hurt the brayne & minde,’ but ‘unpure’ spirits resulted, also altering the state of both body and mind for the worse, often provoking brawling and dissension” (Purnis 806). Here, Lear can feel his body being taken over and tries to stop the vapors from rising from his stomach, the lower faculty, to his heart. “Down, thou climbing sorrow,” he demands, as one might speak to a disobedient dog. However, his attempts are clearly futile. This is made evident later in the scene when Lear, still angry about the treatment of Kent, again gives his passions a direct command: “O me, my heart, my rising heart! but, down!” (2.2.285).¹⁰

Clearly, the passions have, as he feared, already risen from his stomach to his heart. At this point, the fool mocks Lear for his futile attempts to command his humoral body:

Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she rapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried 'Down, wantons, down!' 'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay. (7.279)

Crying “down” to one’s passions is as foolish as beating at live eels while trying to

¹⁰ F only

bake them into a pie. With this image, the fool offers a materialist objection to the popular claim that man has a God-given ability to use reason to expel contaminating humors. Lisa Perfetti argues that this issue was a dominant theme in Christian sermons. She claims that these sermons assert that “although the bodily passions [come] from outer forces, they were not [...] fixed, predetermined, or beyond control” (6). The fool uses visceral imagery in his rejection of human agency; this visual of eels fighting for their life depicts the wriggling, crawling, terrifying otherness of passions. Like the passions, the eels are certainly “outer forces” but they are not, in any way, able to be controlled.

What makes this image of the cockney woman beating at the eels so disturbing is the fact that there are so many eels. To do battle with the passions is to not fight a single serpent, but many desperate eels. Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, claims to have a profound fear of the power of the multiple forces that simultaneously exist within his body.

Tom hath been scared out of his good wits. Bless
thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend!
Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as
Obidicut; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of
stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of
mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids
and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master! (15.54-60)

Of course, Poor Tom is describing demonic forces, not passions. However, ways in which these demons work as they possess him, mirror the embodied passions. For example, Poor Tom implies that Flibbertigibbet takes over the waiting women, and therefore, it is the agency of Flibbertigibbet, not the agency of the woman he possesses, that performs the act of gossip. It is important to note that Shakespeare puts these words

into the mouth of a man pretending to be mad. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Edgar, even as Poor Tom, has ever acted out lust, dumbness, thievery, murder or gossip. However, Gloucester has no doubts about the authenticity of Poor Tom's claims. The concept of the body being taken over by an outside force may be strange and unearthly, but not impossible.

As I have discussed in the introduction, this possibility of the body becoming enthralled to forces beyond the control of reason is central to both the early modern uneasiness regarding passions as well as the contemporary neuroethical debate about biological determinism. Furthermore, the extent to which the early moderns believed that the humoral body could be controlled was not only a subject of debate among early modern philosophers, medical writers and political writers, but has also been a point of contention among historians and literary critics whose scholarship focuses on these early modern discourses. Shakespeare's depiction of the autonomous forces that Lear struggles with and Poor Tom claims to succumb to seems to suggest that he sides with the materialists like Juan Luis Vives, who emphasizes passion's ability to overwhelm the reason and forcibly take control over the body:

Emotions can be as light as the onset of a rising wave. Others are stronger, while others are powerful enough to shake up the soul and dethrone it from the seat of rational judgment by rendering it truly disturbed and impotent, deprived of self-control, subject to strange powers and totally blind, unable to see anything. (4)¹¹

¹¹ Throughout his 1990 translation of Vives's work, Carlos G. Noreña frequently uses the word "emotions." The contemporary meaning of the word: "agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion" did not enter the English language until 1660 (OED). For more on anachronistic uses of the word "emotion" in contemporary works about medieval and early modern writing, see Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, & Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England*, 37.

However, Shakespeare brings this theory about the uncontrollability of the passions into question when the most morally despicable of the play's villains, Cornwall, makes the claim that he has no ability to control his material passion and uses this argument to justify his decision to torture Gloucester. Cornwall specifically argues that his passion has become sovereign over his reason:

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a curtsy to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control. (14.22-25)

Cornwall realizes that he lacks the political power to pass a death sentence on Gloucester. This suggests that he fears the consequences of the action he had already decided to perform in the previous scene, when he told Edmund, "I will have my revenge ere I depart the house" (12.1).

He demonstrates that he is rationally aware that harming Gloucester "without the form of justice" is illegal. However, in the same breath he argues that he is physically incapable of reason. Cornwall argues that his response to Gloucester is not simply situational. Instead, Cornwall claims that his body is changed by the wrath and suggests that the physical element of his behavior is a more convincing excuse than an explanation of the circumstances. Like mad Poor Tom, who describes being possessed by Mordo, Cornwall suggests that his agency is entirely suppressed by the power of wrath. Therefore, he claims that the force of passion, not his autonomous reason, is responsible for raising his hand to pull out the eyes of Gloucester. By emphasizing his knowledge of the illegality of the action while, in the same breath, excusing himself from blame, Cornwall distinguishes his reason (the cognition that allows him to be a

rational Duke), from his passion (the irrational tyrant).

Interestingly, by explaining the process of his rage overcoming his reason, Cornwall undermines the validity of his own claim. It is entirely illogical to rationally discuss the process of having the inability to reason. In this strange, self-contradictory moment, Cornwall uses the vocabulary of Galenic humoralists, like Wright and Vives, who describe passions as bodily forces which can directly counter and occasionally overthrow reason. The use of this language exposes Shakespeare's skepticism about these theories and reveals his participation in a shifting discourse about the mind/body problem.

Recent court cases have been built around the same claim that Cornwall makes: one is not legally held responsible for his or her actions when there is a biological, material cause of the behavior. For example, in 2005, when the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty for juveniles was unconstitutional, its decision took into consideration neuropsychological research which suggests that the brain's frontal lobes, which are crucial for self-control, are not yet mature in adolescents. John Monterosso, Edward B. Royzman, and Barry Schwartz argue that this finding shaped the court's attitudes about whether young people are fully responsible for their actions. Although they support the court's decision, they are concerned with the logic behind the defense. The use of neuroscience in the courtroom suggests that violent teenagers with the underdeveloped brains are not responsible for their behavior because their brains "made them do it." Similar reasoning is often applied to behavior arising from chemical imbalances in the brain. These scholars performed a study by asking a group to complete questionnaires about the culpability of a violent criminal. They gave their

respondents information about the criminal which included both a history of psychologically horrific events that the individual had experienced (e.g., suffering abuse as a child) and an explanation of biological characteristics or anomalies in the individual's brain (e.g., an imbalance in neurotransmitters). Their results showed that a physiological factor, including a brain abnormality that was weakly associated with violence, led people to exonerate the protagonist significantly more often than a psychological factor. They conclude:

Put together, these three propositions — (a) mind (soul) and body are two separate entities capable of independently affecting human behavior; (b) behavior is voluntary and “owned” by the self only insofar as it flows from the mind or the soul; and (c) alternative, independently plausible and noncontradictory accounts of human action can undercut each other — may elucidate why, in our vignettes, when a physiological explanation was given, participants tended to view the body as the cause of the behavior and motivations as less relevant, with the result that the behavior was perceived as less voluntary. (155)

In their accompanying article for *The Sunday Review*, they label this pattern of responses “naïve dualism.” They express concern that “if we view every new scientific finding about brain involvement in human behavior as a sign that the behavior was not under the individual's control, the very notion of responsibility will be threatened” (1). Like humoral physiology, recent findings of neuropsychology complicate the notion of human agency and bring culpability into question.

Shakespeare takes on this issue of personal responsibility by positioning Cornwall's excuse as entirely unacceptable. However, before I go on to trace the ways in which Cornwall is condemned for his unforgivable decision to pluck out Gloucester's eyes, it is important to note that Shakespeare is not consistent in the way he approaches this excuse about the agency of passions. The villainous Cornwall is not

the only character to claim that wrath, not reason, is the agent of the violent action.

Kent, one of the play's most virtuous characters, uses the same argument to justify his choice to beat Oswald. In scene seven, when Cornwall comes upon Kent and Oswald fighting, Kent is in a rage. He threatens to beat Oswald to death, telling Cornwall "I will tread this/unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall of a jakes with him" (7.59-60). Cornwall acts as if he is scandalized by this display of violence and asks, "have you no reverence?" (7.63). Kent replies, "Yes, sir, but anger hath a privilege" (7.64). Reverence, temperance, patience: all are overthrown by Kent's wrath. Like Cornwall, Kent personifies anger and depicts it as an outside force which his reason cannot control. Furthermore, Kent, like Cornwall, is remorseless about his action. Of course, the consequences of Cornwall's rage (which results in the blinding of the old, noble Gloucester) and Kent's (which ends with the comical beating of the smarmy Oswald) cannot be equated. However, they use the same rationalization for their acts of violence.

Although Cornwall's claim about his inability to prevent his passion from being sovereign is an attempt to use the predominant theory of passion to pardon his immoral behavior, Shakespeare presents Kent's identical claim as a sincere explanation of his internal battle with his passions. It is important to note that the wrath that Cornwall personifies in his self-aware description does not turn him into a choleric monster; choler had always been his dominant humor. Similarly, the anger that overcomes Kent does not force him to do anything out of character; he remains the loyal balanced servant. In fact, as he explains to Cornwall, he beats Oswald specifically because of his commitment to being a good servant. When Cornwall asks Kent, "Why art thou angry?"

(7.65) questioning the source of the very passion that Kent claims he cannot control,

Kent replies by specifically explaining that he hates Oswald for being an insufferable flatterer who instigates his master's passions, unlike a loyal servant who will stand up to his master:

Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite those holy cords in twain
Which are too entrenched to unloose, smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel,
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
Knowing naught, like dogs, but following. (7.67-74)

Kent believes that it is the good servant's responsibility to aid his master in the battle against rebellious passions and prevent passions from overthrowing his master's reason.

In the opening act, Kent had preformed the duties he describes by attempting to mitigate Lear's rage, and even though he had been banished for his intervention, he knows he acted loyally. Flatterers and followers like Oswald, only increase the power of these dangerous shifts in the master's body temperature, passion, and mood. By claiming that the servant can help a master battle the passions and that the flatterer increases the passions, Kent suggests that passions, even powerful "gales," can and should be controlled. Ironically, this claim contradicts the justification for his anger which he had just described. Kent's argument can be paraphrased as "I cannot control my own passion because I am so passionate about Oswald's inability to help his master control his passion."

Kent's passion is not the barbaric force described by Vives or Wright. Rather than leading to sin, the agency of his anger affirms his core values. Directly after

Cornwall shockingly plucks out Gloucester's first eye and blames his uncontrollable wrath for the action, his unnamed manservant experiences a similar passion. The Servant perfectly plays the role of the good servant that Kent describes. Unlike Oswald, the flatterer who brings oil to fire, the Servant attempts to help Cornwall control his passion. He is clearly unconvinced by Cornwall's claim that he cannot control his wrath and orders him to use reason to take control over his body. He demands, "Hold your hand, my lord" (14.69). Although the Servant recognizes that Cornwall will read his interjection as a subversion, he explains that he is acting loyally: "I have served you ever since I was a child,/ But better service have I never done you/ Than now to bid you hold" (14.70-73). In his discussion of the ethical implications of this moment, James Knapp argues, "Judging from the dialogue, the Servant's decision appears to be a result of moral reasoning, carefully articulated" (9). The Servant is defender of the fortress of Cornwall's reason; Cornwall is mobbed with violent passion. However, when Cornwall refuses to be swayed by the Servant's reasoned interjection, the Servant challenges him to "take the chance of anger" (14.76). In other words, the Servant argues that his anger, not his reason, is the agent of his violent act. Interestingly, he becomes governed by anger while refuting Cornwall's claim about being subject to wrath. Knapp notes, "both men invoke passionate emotion (wrath and anger) rather than reasoned judgment as the source of their action" (11), and I add that both men argue that wrath and anger are not only the sources of their violent action, but the agents of it.

Knapp goes on to point out the paradoxical relationship between Cornwall and the Servant's reasoned discourse about the passions and their claims to be entirely overcome by violent passions. He asks, "If Cornwall's wrath is so uncontrollable as to

force his (just) power to “do a curtsy to” it, would he really take the time to articulate this? Similarly, would a servant so overcome by a scene of injustice that he is willing to risk his life to stop it articulate his motivation at the moment of crisis?” (11). However, throughout *The History of King Lear*, characters are consistently stopping mid- expression of passion to explain the ways in which their bodies are processing the changes. Shakespeare is interested in moving this deeply internal struggle for agency out of the body and onto the observable stage. In order to achieve this, characters must use language to describe the internal and invisible battles which take place within their bodies and narrate their struggles to understand them and control them.

Furthermore, characters consistently attempt to understand the actions of others by making claims about their internal bodies. For example, Cornwall’s self-declared tendency towards unmanageable embodied anger is given further credibility by other character’s descriptions of him. In scene 7, when Lear is furious after Gloucester tells him that Cornwall and Regan refuse to speak to him, Gloucester tries to explain to Lear the futility of his attempt to change Cornwall’s mind by describing Cornwall’s humoral imbalance:

My dear lord,
 You know the fiery quality of the Duke,
 How unremovable and fixed he is
 In his own course.” (7.251-254)

Gloucester is not necessarily excusing Cornwall’s stubborn refusal to see Lear, but he does explain that this stubbornness is directly linked to the temperature of his body (which Cornwall can not control). Timothy Bright draws this connection between a hot

body temperature and irrational behavior in *A Treatise of Melancholie*:¹²

Melancholie signifieth in all, either a certayne fearfull disposition of the mind altered from reason, or else an humour of the body, commonly taken to be the only cause of reason by feare in such sort depraved. This humour is of two sorts: naturall, or unnaturall: naturall is either the grosser part of the bloud ordained for nourishment, which either by abundance or immoderate hotnesse, passing measure, surchargeth the bodie, and yeeldeth up to the braine certaine vapors, whereby the understanding is obscured; all organicall actions are therof mixed with melancholie madnesse. (Quoted in Radden, 121)

Jennifer Radden summarizes Bright's complicated classifications of melancholy. "He divides melancholia the disease... from melancholy the humor, and he distinguishes among instances of the melancholy humor being those that are natural and unnatural.

As a result of bodily heating of various kinds, the natural melancholy humor could become unnatural, and thus lead to melancholia, the disease" (120). In this system of physiology, there is no distinction between a physical and mental disability;

melancholia, the disease of the mind, is as material as a disease of any bodily organ.

Gloucester clearly describes the hot, violent, impatient Cornwall as choleric, not melancholic. However, like Bright, Gloucester suggests that the overabundance of Cornwall's humor has led to disease. He suggests that this physical ailment explains (even if it does not pardon) his inappropriate conduct.

At first, hearing Gloucester's rationalization of Cornwall's unacceptable behavior, Lear is incredulous and dismissive of the warning that he should not bother to

¹² Several early 20th c. scholars have argued that Shakespeare read and was deeply influenced by Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholie* including J. Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* and Mary O'Sullivan, *Hamlet and Dr. Timothy Bright*. Mary Crane cites these critics in her *Shakespeare's Brain*. She argues, "Bright includes lengthy, often contradictory descriptions of the internal workings of body, soul, and mind... It was this sense of interior process and preoccupation with the spatiality and direction of agency that strongly influenced Shakespeare" (120).

change the mind of such a literally hot-headed man. He says, “Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that —” and then pauses (7.261). At this point, Shakespeare sets the audience up to expect Lear “to be moved to a rage,” but instead, Lear stops himself, mid rant, to contemplate Gloucester’s claim about Cornwall.

No, but not yet. Maybe he is not well.
 Infirmary doth still neglect all office
 Whereto our health is bound. We are not ourselves
 When nature, being oppressed, commands the mind
 To suffer with the body. I'll forbear; (7.262-266)

If Cornwall’s body is truly oppressed with disease, his body temperature may really be the cause of his bad behavior. Lear suggest that the bodily forces can determine how and why men act as they do. “Infirmary,” the material force of overabundant humors, has the ability to make the mind and the body suffer together. Here, Lear lays out a complicated relationship between the self, the mind and the body. He draws a dualist distinction between the mind and body, equating the mind with reason and the body with passion. He suggests that in a healthy body reason does “not suffer with” passion, but is superior to it and has agency over it. Disease breaks down that distinction. Disease integrates reason and passion through mutual suffering and oppresses “nature,” or the normative relationship between the two opposed forces.

Remarkably, this rationale allows Lear to temporarily accept Gloucester’s justification of Cornwall’s stubbornness. Scrutinizing the body/nature relationship allows him to account for otherwise incomprehensible and unforgivable behavior. In light of this realization, Lear becomes self critical and blames himself for not recognizing the telltale signs of Cornwall’s illness earlier:

I'll forbear,
 And am fallen out with my more headier will,
 To take the indisposed and sickly fit
 For the sound man. (7.266-269)

Here, he again uses humoral language which further complicates the relationship between the mind, body, and self. He (the balanced, healthily rational Lear) has become disconnected from his own “headier will” (his ability to reason) which has caused him to mistake a “sickly fit” (Cornwall’s diseased body) for the “sound man” (a rational Cornwall). However, immediately after Lear analyzes his own failures of reason, he looks back at Kent in the stocks and his anger is brought back to the forefront, making him question his previous claim:

Death on my state,
 Wherefore should he sit here? This act persuades me
 That this remotion of the Duke and her
 Is practice only. (7.269-272)

As a result of this sudden surge of passion, Lear’s perspective about the authenticity of Cornwall’s passion-induced disease instantly changes. No longer does he believe that Cornwall suffers from a bodily illness which prevents him from reason. Now, Lear concludes that Cornwall’s stubbornness is intentional and that he is feigning the illness in order to fool him; Cornwall may be in control of his actions but pretending not to be. What is so fascinating about the moment that follows is that the audience is able to see Lear perform the effects of the “sickly fit” he has just described, defended, questioned and then rejected. Unlike Cornwall, who reasons about his inability to reason moments before blinding Gloucester, Lear performs the effects of passion on his body. A rage rises from his body into his mind and hinders his ability to reason. Gone is the rational Lear who was able to temporarily coolly contemplate Cornwall’s health and reason.

Instead, he is overcome; his language stops making sense and his actions become increasingly bizarre as he threatens to “beat the drum” at Cornwall and Regan’s door “Till it cry sleep to death” (7.275-276).

However, just because Shakespeare uses the language of contemporary physiology to position the passions as forces that cannot necessarily be controlled, does not mean that he positions Cornwall as an innocent victim of passion or acquits him for his immoral behavior. While Cornwall’s reason is quick to curtsy to wrath, other characters go to battle with their bodies, attempting to maintain agency over the passions. Just as Lear becomes aware of the bodily passions overcoming his reason in scene 7, he calls to out to his rising heart, attempting to stop the swell of passion from it, prompting the fool to mock him with the metaphor of the eels. Again and again, Lear fails to prevent the passions from overcoming his fragile body. However, he continues to battle with passions for agency over his body. For example, at the end of scene 7, after his daughters refuse to allow his men into Regan’s house, he begins to weep. He can feel his humoral state changing, his body temperature dropping. He attempts to avoid despair by harnessing the multiple contrasting passions into violent, choleric vengeance:

You see me here, you gods, a poor old fellow,
As full of grief as age, wretched in both.
If it be you that stirs these daughters’ hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely. Touch me with noble anger.
O, let not women’s weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man’s cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall—I will do such things—
What they are yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I’ll weep.

No, I'll not weep. (7.425-436)

He asks the gods for help to stop the melancholy from overcoming him. His natural choleric state is threatened by this grief and he attempts to transform it into anger. Yet, his grief and anger contradict one another and work against each other. His melancholy makes him want to acquiesce to tears, become submissive and allow his daughter's to control him. His choler incites him to a rage which leads him to refuse to go into the house on his daughter's terms. Lear recognizes that attempting to fight against the passions as they recompose his body's humors is a dangerous task. He claims "I have full cause of weeping but this heart/ Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws/ Or ere I'll weep. –O fool, I shall go mad" (7.437-9). The most common reading of Lear's fear of "heartbreak" understands it as an analogy for psychological anguish. In my next chapter, I will return to this moment to argue for a literal reading. Lear, whose humoral body is besieged by two contrasting emotions, fears that the organ of heart will physically burst as a result of holding too many liquid humors. His heart remains intact for the moment, but his fear of heartbreak foreshadows his death in the final scene.

Not only does Lear attempt to control his own passions, he consistently attempts to control the passions of others. When Cordelia and Lear are reunited, Cordelia begins to weep after seeing her father weak and mad. He recognizes the tears, the physical manifestation of sorrow, as her love. He asks, "Be your tears wet?" (21.67). He cannot believe that the only daughter who has cause to hate him is the only one who truly loves him. Only after he touches Cordelia's tears is Lear able to recognize her previously unknowable interiority. He is taken aback by her love. Yet, his next command is to ask her to control her embodied passions: "Yes, faith. I pray, weep not" (21.68). Again,

Lear expresses the desire to control his tears to Cordelia in Scene 24, as they are both being led to prison. For a second time, he constructs tears, the physical manifestation of melancholy, as a sign of weakness. He sees that Cordelia is beginning to cry and demands that she “Wipe thine eyes./ The goodyear shall devour ‘em, flesh and fell,/ Ere they shall make us weep. We’ll see ‘em starve first” (24.23-5). He equates his desire to refuse defeat by his evil daughters with his desire to control his bodily affects and encourages Cordelia to manage her tears for the same purpose.

Albany demonstrates a similar ability to maintain rational control over the passions as they possess his changing humoral body. He explains that he feels that his body is possessed by passions and that his body wants to tear his wife to pieces:

Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones. (16.61-65)¹³

However, he manages to remain temperate. He (the rational Albany), not his wrath, is in control of his hands, and therefore, he resists physically harming Gonoril. Ironically, Gonoril resents Albany's insistence on battling his violent passions. Rather than encouraging Albany to become more temperate and controlled, she urges him to become more choleric. She hurls a description of his dis-impassioned humoral body as a brutal insult:

Milk-livered man,
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs,
Who hast not in thy brows an eye for discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; (16.49-52)

According to Paster, early modern physiology understood the liver to be the seat of

¹³ Q1 only

sexual passion and anger, both of which Goneril accuses Albany of lacking (*Humoring the Body* 37). However, she does not accept his milky liver as an excuse for his passive behavior any more than Lady Macbeth does when she insults Macbeth for being afraid to act (*Macbeth* 1.5.15).¹⁴

If Albany and Cordelia can master their passions while mad Poor Tom, Lear, Kent, Cornwall's loyal servant and the evil Cornwall claim they cannot, where does Shakespeare stand on the issue of biological determinism? Does power do curtsy to wrath? Can anger have privilege? How strong is the relation between the cause (multiple, conflicting and powerful passions) and the effect (a character's actions)? As Bamforth argued in 1952, the inability to manage passion with reason is central to *King Lear*. However, what is distinctly absent from the play is Bamforth's "perfect formula for tragedy." Shakespeare does not offer a linear narrative in which the hero is infected by passion, overthrown by it, commits a sinful action, and finally suffers as a result of passion. Instead, he disrupts this conventional account by creating characters who experience conflicted passions which affect them in ambiguous ways. Some passions lead to sin (like Cornwall's wrath) and others to heroism (like the Servant's wrath). Some reason enables characters to be temperate and exemplary (like Cordelia's reason) while other reason justifies unforgivable acts (like Cornwall's reason).

¹⁴ Lai Sai Acón Chan points out, "Afraid that her husband's nature 'is too full o'th' milk of human kindness' (1.5.15) Lady Macbeth summons the 'spirits/ That tend on mortal thoughts' 'to unsex [her]/ And fill [me] from the crown to the toe top-full/ Of direst cruelty! make thick [her] blood;/ Stop up the access and passage to re- morse,/ That no compunctious visitings of nature/ Shake [her] fell purpose, nor keep peace between/ The effect and it! Come to [her] woman's breasts,/ And take [her] milk for gall' (1.5.38-47). Likewise, Goneril censures the 'milky gentle- ness' (1.4.295) of Albany and, in the process, she is cursed with sterility" (48).

Throughout the play, Shakespeare's treatment of the internal warfare between the passions and reason is radically inconsistent. The play deeply engages with the debate about the power of embodied passions but offers no conclusion.

Shakespeare breaks down the belief inherent to both Galenic humoralism and contemporary neuroscience: physical material can govern our bodies against our will. For Shakespeare, the issue of agency is far more complicated and narratively compelling. Rather than imply that reason and passion are categorically distinct and that people are responsible for actions initiated by one but not the other, Shakespeare puts the forces of embodied passions and human agency in conversation and conflict. He stages the autonomous forces of reason and multiple, contrasting passions in an ongoing battle which takes place inside of the changing, conflicted, unpredictable human body, a body which is indistinct from the material of affect.

CHAPTER FIVE

LITERAL HEARTBREAK

In the previous chapters, I have discussed how the understanding of emotion as bodily material (the Galenic humors, being moved by passions and animal spirits, or brain neurons, transmitting and reabsorbing neurotransmitters) affects the extent to which we believe we can govern our emotional responses. In this chapter I look at the most extreme cases of staged emotional materiality: the moments that characters die of heartbreak. I began this study of heartbreak expecting to see concrete examples of the emotional made material; nothing destroys the distinction between mind and body like being physically killed by intense emotion. Surely, in order for emotion to be fatal, it must be consubstantial with the body. I assumed that a close reading of breaking hearts would challenge the thesis that I have supported over the last four chapters about how both early modern writers and my contemporaries weave together “dualistic habits of thought” and the monistic, materialistic language of either Galenic humoralism or neurobiology to make sense of their emotional experiences. I expected to find the narrative of emotion break down at the moment when the material organ of the humorally overrun heart stops beating. However, what I found when I looked closely at these moments was not a silencing of the dualist narrative. Instead, the narrative becomes increasingly important.

In this chapter I will discuss the ways that characters take control over their own breaking hearts by managing their self-narratives and argue that the stories the characters tell about what the materials in their bodies are doing not only determines how they define what their emotions are, but also changes what the material of those emotions are is able to do to the body.

Early Modern Meaning of Heartbreak

Heartbreak is traditionally understood as inherently metaphorical. The OED defines heartbreak in immaterial terms: “Overwhelming, unbearable, or intense sorrow or emotional distress, esp. as a result of bereavement or the end of a romantic relationship; the fact or experience of having a broken heart” (OED). Certainly, Shakespeare uses the notion of heartbreak in this way. Hamlet, describing his mother’s rushed marriage to his uncle, concludes “It is not, nor it cannot come to good./ But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue” (*Hamlet* 1.2.157-158). Coriolanus explains that he sends his dear friend Menenius, away with a “cracked heart” (*Coriolanus* 5.3.9). In *King Lear*, when Edgar discovers his father’s blindness and Lear’s madness, he says, “my heart breaks at it” (*King Lear* 4.6.137). Of course, Hamlet, Coriolanus, and Edgar do not mean to say that the actual organs of their heart are materially fractured; instead, they use the notion of heartbreak to communicate their overwhelmingly painful sadness.

However, when Edgar describes his father’s death explaining, “his flawed heart,/ Alack, too weak the conflict to support!/ Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,/Burst smilingly,” he is no longer speaking metaphorically (*King Lear* 24.192). Metaphor cannot explain what happens to tortured, old Gloucester as he recognizes Edgar’s voice nor Lear as he cradles Cordelia’s corpse. In an alarming moment in the

Winter's Tale, when Paulina announces Hermione's death, she screams out "Woe the while! O, cut my lace, lest my heart, cracking it/ Break too" (3.2.170-173). Paulina must cut the fabric over her breasts to prevent her expanding, overrun heart from cracking against her bodice. She is not referring to a figurative heart, but to a materially expanding organ. Why does the healthy, young Enobarbus suddenly die alone outside of Caesar's camp after abandoning Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*? What kills Mamillius, the young son of Leontes and Hermione, in *The Winter's Tale*, Catherine's sister in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Montague's wife in *Romeo and Juliet*, Desdemona's father in *Othello*, or Posthumus's father and the homicidal Queen in *Cymbeline*? For these characters, the experience of heartbreak is not metaphorical but is experienced as a physical bursting of the heart, a somatic death as a result of overwhelming, embodied, material emotion. In order to understand heartbreak in these instances, the trope must be opened up and viewed as a literal, rather than figurative, breaking.¹

As Katherine Maus explains, "Renaissance speech habits can make it difficult to know when ... a bodily analogy is really an analogy; when we are dealing with metaphor and when with a bare statement of fact" (196). This particular bodily analogy is complicated by the fact that both early modern medical texts and fictional dramatic works simultaneously use the word "heart" to discuss the physical organ and a person's inmost being. Rather than distinguishing between these two meanings, anatomy, in its early forms, tends to make the connection between body and soul literal, rather than one of

¹ This is not to say that there is not room for fruitful readings of the metaphorical meaning of heartbreak in Shakespeare's work. For example, In "The Emotional Landscape of King Lear," Arthur Kirsch successfully argues, "The dramatization of the metaphor of a breaking heart and its association with the extremity of dying are central to *King Lear*" (155).

mere analogy (Sugg 89). The notion that the soul is in someway located in the organ of the heart dates to Aristotle.² While, in the Platonic tradition (represented by the works of Ficino) the human soul was considered to be the connection between the higher realm of God and mind with the lower realm of quality and matter (the body), in the Aristotelian tradition (endorsed by Galenic medical writers) the human was thought of as a body-soul composite (Carrera 15). Galen, in his *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, claims, “The heart is, as it were, the hearthstone and source of the innate heat by which the animal is governed” (292). Early modern Galenists continue to subscribe to this notion of the heart. For example, 16th century theologian Philipp Melanchthon explains, “The heart signifies not only the sensitive appetite, as they call it, but it means the seat of all affections—love, hate, blasphemy, and incredulity” (108). French royal surgeon Ambroise Paré describes the heart as:

The chiefe mansion of the Soul, the organ of the vitall faculty, the beginning of life, the fountaine of the vitall spirits, & so consequently the continuall nourisher of the vitall heate, the first living and last dying which because it must have a naturall motion of it self, was made of a dense solide and more compact substance than any other part of the body. (N6v) The

heart is the physical grounding of identity. It draws in all passions and holds the body’s humors. Although Pare discusses the toughness of the material of the heart, it was

² For a detailed account of many contradictory readings of Aristotle’s placement of the soul “in” the heart, see J.P. Anton’s “Heart and Soul in Aristotle,” *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (1971). While he concludes that Aristotle certainly does not simply locate the soul inside of the heart, he still asserts, “the soul as originating change and controlling the life function is present in the heart in a way in which it is not present in other organs” (337).

also considered by anatomists, philosophers, theologians, and medical doctors to be a particularly vulnerable organ.³

Many of the medical and philosophical writers who added to the passions discourse discuss the possibility of dying of a broken heart. For example, in *The Castle of Health* Thomas Elyot opens his chapter “Of Dolor or Heaviness of Mind” by claiming “There is noothinge more ennemye to lyfe, than sorowe, called also heavinesse” (Dii). The popular French physician Jacques Ferrand, whose treatise on love melancholy was translated into English in 1640, describes how the organ of the heart is literally expanded and contracted by emotion. He explains, “In fact, each one of us experiences daily how the heart squeezes up when we are sad or afraid, and how, on the contrary, it opens up and dilates when there is joy and hope” (256). *The London Bills of Mortality*, weekly municipal death records collected from 1603 onwards, document this belief in the power of sorrow to cause death. “Between 1629 and 1660, the Bills record more than 350 deaths from grief in the city” (Sullivan, “Shakespeare and the History of Heartbreak” 933).

Like Melanchthon, Thomas Wright describes the heart as “the peculiar place where that Passions allodge” and describes how passions change the body (D1r). He asserts:

Yet the Passions which [constrict] the heart, as fear, sadness, and despayre, as they bring payne to the minde, so they are more dangerous to the body; and commonly, men proove less harme in [illness], than in these: and many have lost their lives with sadness and fear, but few, with love and hope, except they changed themselves into heaviness and despayre. (E7r)

³ For more about how the links between emotions and the heart developed between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries, see chapter 1, “Humours to Hormones,” of Fay Bound Alberti’s *Matters of the Heart* (2010).

Wright leaves an essential question open: What makes the hope turn into heaviness and love into despair? What does the changing?

English physician Edward Jorden offers an unexpected answer in his discussion of a common illness that specifically affects young girls and widows in his 1603 tract, *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease called the Suffocation of the Mother*.⁴ Like Burton, who calls for melancholics to change their diet and exercise to rid themselves of melancholy, and Ferrand, who advises the lovesick to mix herbal remedies in order to excrete their excess humors, Jordan argues that the “mother” disease has “natural cause” and can be cured by fasting and avoiding “mental perturbation.” Jorden criticizes Catholic priests who improperly treat the disease as a manifestation of demonic possession and ridiculously wave daggers over the bodies of the suffering woman to exorcize evil spirits. However, as Jean E. Howard points out, Jordan’s mockery of the ineffectiveness of the priests is hypocritical. Jorden, recognizing that “affections and perturbations of the mind” affect disease, encourages “confirming the fantasies” of those suffering from “The Mother” (G4r).⁵ Jorden notes,

⁴ For a nuanced discussion of how “The Mother” participates in a larger discourse about female hysteria, see Kaara L. Peterson’s *Popular Medicine, Hysterical Disease, and Social Controversy in Shakespeare*.

⁵ Howard explains how Jordan hypocritically positions the physician’s trickery as useful but the Papists’ trickery as sinful:

What separates Jorden from the Papists is his desire to help, and their lust for power yet Jordan’s whole tract is part of a larger movement to take power over men and women’s bodies from the hands of cunning women and mid-wives and village healers and to vest it in the hands of the men of the College of Physicians to whom he dedicated his tract, just as it is part of the larger movement to take control over men and women’s souls from the godless Papists and to vest it in the hands of the godly Protestants. All may have recourse at times to tricks, disguises, and theatrical deceits, but only some can do so “legitimately,” i.e. without being branded as mere powerhungry tricksters. (3)

Galen boasteth that he did every yeare cure many diseases by this stratagem of moderating the perturbations of the mind by the example of Aesenlapins who devised many songs and ridiculous pastimes for that purpose. To which end also other phisitions have used divers sorts of fallacies to encounter the melancholike conceits of their patients. (G4r)

Like the dagger waving priests whom he ridicules, Jordan's chief source and anatomical idol, Galen, engaged in overdramatic performances to make his patients believe that they were cured of their diseases.

Jordan goes on to describe tricks that successful physicians have played on their patients in order to heal them. A woman who "imagined" that the devil was the cause of her illness was suddenly cured when her son made her believe that he looked into her mirror and saw a large devil drive three smaller devils out of her (G4r). Another woman stopped suffering when a physician put nails, needles, feathers "and such like things" inside her "close stoole" and made her believe that they came out of her body (G4v).

Finally he describes a traditional prodigal son story.

A young man falling out of favour with his father, fell therupon into the fits of the falling sickness, and continued long and often molested there with, untill a reconciliation was wrought with his father: who sending him a kind letter to that effect, the young man was presently delivered from that fearful disease. (H1r)

These are three very different case studies. One patient is told a fictional, superstitious story about devils leaving her body, one is provided with falsified ocular proof of a medical extraction of the cause of her ills, and one is physically cured by the real acceptance of his father's love. The one thing that all of these patients have in common is that they are able to use their experience to change their personal narratives about their bodies.

According to Jorden, these diseases are not cured by the remedies but by the ill person's belief in them. Interestingly, Jordan draws no distinction between the belief in possession (which entails a belief in losing body and soul to the devil), the belief that one excretes nails and feathers, or the belief in a father's love. Despite the radically different pains that they suffered and the difference in the stories that they were told, they all are able to change their narratives about their unified body/self; this change in narrative enables their bodies to materially heal. Jordan concludes his tract by asserting:

And it is no marvel that the affections of the mind doe beare such rule in this disease, seeing we doe observe that most commonly besides the indisposition of the bodie: here is also some Melancholike or capricious conceit joyned withall of love, feare, hatred, jealousie, discontentment, witchcraft, poysoning, &c. which being policie or good instructions and perswasions removed, the disease is easily overcome. (H1v)

According to Jordan, affections certainly have control over the body, but good instructions and persuasions can also heal the body. Jordan is specifically interested in how the mind can be changed by narrative. Since, for Jordan, emotional pain is physical pain, he understands that when a person changes the story that they tell themselves about who they are and what their bodies feel, they can either inflict disease upon themselves or purge their bodies of that same disease.

Heartbreak in the 21st Century

In the early modern period, all disease involves both the body and mind. Now, as neuroscientists take new approaches to studying psychosomatic disorders (diseases of the body caused by the mind), the dualist distinction between the experiences of emotional and physical pain is becoming blurred. Ethan Kross, lead researcher and an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, takes on this question in his 2011

study, “Social Rejection Shares Somatosensory Representations with Physical Pain.”

He describes two painful experiences. In one scenario, Kross spills hot coffee on his arm; in another he views a photo of a beloved former romantic partner, which makes him feel rejected. Both experiences are described with words like “hurt” or “pain” but are distinct (Kross et al. 6271). To explore the connection between these different forms of pain, he recruited 40 individuals who recently experienced an unwanted romantic relationship break-up to perform tasks that stimulated both types of pain. The participants underwent fMRI scans (which measure neural activity by tracking changes in blood flow) during four tasks. He tested two types of physical pain: “Hot trials, in which participants experienced noxious thermal stimulation on their left forearm, and Warm trials, in which participants experienced non-noxious thermal stimulation in the same area” (Kross et al. 6271). To test the pain of emotional rejection, participants viewed a pair of headshots. In the “Rejection trials” they were asked to think about a specific rejection experience while looking at a picture of a former romantic partner. In the “Friend trials” participants viewed a headshot of a friend who was the same sex as their ex-partner and thought about a recent positive experience they shared with that person” (Kross et al. 6271). The fMRI scans showed that during both the “Hot trial” and the “Rejection trial” there was an identical change in brain activity. Both showed “increases in thalamus and right parietal opercular/insular cortex” (6272). The brain was materially altered by both the physically painful and emotionally painful experiences in the same way. Kross concluded,

“Rejection and physical pain are similar not only in that they are both distressing-- they share a common somatosensory representation as well” (6271).⁶

In an interview about this influential study Kross claims, “Heartache and painful breakups are more than just metaphors” (McMillen 1). This conclusion is increasingly becoming a commonplace among researchers. In fact, according to Kyung Bong Koh, a psychiatrist and researcher at Yonsei University College of Medicine, it is no longer hyperbolic to discuss the literally broken heart. Psychosomatic illnesses can manifest themselves in many ways and depression is an established risk factor for coronary heart disease (Bong Koh 191). For example, Takotsubo cardiomyopathy, a sudden weakening of the muscle of the heart, can be instigated by emotional stress. Since the people who suffer from this disease are frequently mourning the death of a loved one, it is popularly referred to as “the broken heart syndrome.”

As emerging studies like Kross’s demonstrate that the brain processes emotional and physical pain in the same way, clinicians are becoming increasingly interested in how patients can control self-narrative in order to manage pain. After all, Kross’s trial participants experienced pain while looking at the picture of a former lover but did not while looking at the picture of a friend. It is not the act of looking at headshots that is painful; it is the fact that each image visually and instantaneously communicates a pre-existing narrative. Each participant has already constructed a story about the person in each headshot; it is this story that materially changes the brain. E.O Wilson, a Pulitzer prize winning biologist, addresses the ways in which brain processes rely on narrative:

⁶ For more somatosensory representation see James R. Augustine’s *Human Neuroanatomy*, section 8.2.5 (135-136).

With new tools and models, neuroscientists have joined cognitive psychologists in drawing closer to an understanding of the conscious mind as a narrative generator. Working on the same questions from different perspectives, neuroscientists, cognitive psychologists, and even evolutionary biologists are converging on a common theory of the brain: It develops stories to filter and make sense of the flood of information that we are exposed to every day. (10)

Like the Galenists, who imagine the passions and imaginations as autonomous forces,

Wilson imagines the brain acting as an agent as it frantically creates these narratives.

According to Wilson, we cannot have conscious control over these stories. In her article,

“The Brain Basis of Emotion,” Harvard neurologist Kristen Lindquist similarly describes the brain’s method of processing information:

Only some of the wavelengths of light striking our retinas are transformed into seen objects, only some of the changes in air pressure registered in our ears are heard as words or music, and only some bodily changes are experienced as emotion. To categorize something is to render it meaningful. It then becomes possible to make reasonable inferences about that thing, to predict what to do with it, and to communicate our experience of it to others. There are ongoing debates about how categorization works, but the fact that it works is not in question. (Lindquist 124)

If we do not even understand how the brain categorizes information into narrative, how

can we take control over that narrative in order to manage and control the ways we

experience emotion? Nataša Jokić-Begić, professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at

University of Zagreb, Croatia, offers a potential solution: cognitive-behavioral therapy.

“Cognitive-behavioral therapies combine two different theoretical and therapeutic

approaches resulting from two different, but complementary paradigms of human nature

and psychopathology” (Jokić-Begić 236). She cites research that supports her claim:

when cognitive-behavioral therapy encourages people to change the story that they tell

themselves about who they are, it also changes their neurobiology. She argues,

Cognitive activity may be changed, as shown by therapeutic success achieved by metacognitive and mindfulness techniques, which also have their neurobiological correlates in the changes occurring in the cortical and subcortical structures and endocrine and immune systems. The empirical research also shows that neurobiological changes occur after CBT [Cognitive-behavioral therapies] in patients with arachnophobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, social phobia, major depressive disorder and chronic fatigue syndrome. (237)

Like Jordan, who alleviated the suffering of his patients by enabling them to tell new stories about their bodies, Jokić-Begić argues that a change in narrative can become a change in body.

Staging Heartbreak

This neurobiological explanation about material changes, which occur in a body after a change in self-narrative, can open a new way of understanding how the original early modern audience might have interpreted dramatic characters' heartbreaks. For example, it can open a new reading of Falstaff's death in *Henry V*. According to the Hostess, "The King has killed [Falstaff's] heart" (2.1.79). Nim explains Falstaff's malady by suggesting, "The King hath run bad humors on the knight, that's the even of it" (2.1.110). Pistol agrees, claiming, "His heart is fractured and corroborate" (2.1.110). Is the dying Falstaff's heart metaphorically or literally broken? The non-dualist approach to social rejection, which both neuroscientists like Kross and Galenists like Jordan understand as a material change in the body, allows for both readings to be simultaneously true. The change in self-narrative, which Hal's rejection has forced upon Falstaff, materially alters his body and also alters the emotional core of his being. Shakespeare does not stage Falstaff's death, so the audience cannot know how the heartbroken Falstaff makes sense of his own painful experience. All we know is that, on

his deathbed, Falstaff calls for both God and sack, suggesting that he maintains his belief in the spiritually curative powers of a good drink up until the very end.

In *All is True* aka *Henry VIII*, Queen Katherine, like Falstaff, dies offstage after she is forced to change her self-narrative against her will. King Henry metaphorically breaks Katherine's heart when he divorces her. This divorce does not only change the story she tells about her relationship, it changes the story she tells herself about who she is and what she is capable of. Initially, she describes herself as an agent who is fully in command over her emotional body. During her abortive trial she imagines taking control over the material substance of her embodied emotion; she responds to the king's rejection by claiming, "my drops of tears I'll turn to sparks of fire" (2.4.7). She asserts that she will turn her melancholic grief into choleric rage. However, later, she expresses less lively confidence as she describes how the weight and "the burden of my sorrows" have grown (3.1.110). She despairingly tells the manipulative Wolsey and Campeius, that "Like the lily, / That once was mistress of the field and flourished, / I'll hang my head and perish" (3.1.110, 150-152). Campeius and Wolsey, trying to convince Katherine to accept the terms of the divorce, treat her despair as a weakness; they tell her that she ought to have more control over her passions. Campeius condescendingly claims that her concerns about what will happen to her are "weak women's fears" which she ought to be able to ignore (3.2.167). Wolsey explains that he is confident she will be able to master her "stubborn spirits" and tells her, "I know you have a gentle, noble temper, / A soul as even as a calm" (3.2.165-166). Campeius makes the same claim about her ability to manage irrational passions: "A noble spirit, / As yours was put into you, ever casts / Such doubts, as false coin, from it" (3.2.168-170). Like Jonson's Doctor Clement, who scolds Lorenzo

Senior for his melancholy, they tell Katherine to manage her suffering body by controlling her self-narrative. However, while they frame her despondency as a lack of self-control, Katherine frames it as a choice. When she explains that she will hang her head and perish, she imagines her rational, conscious self as the agent of this perishing. She willfully constructs the narrative that ultimately leads to her demise.

Soon after, Katherine's servants, Patience and Griffith note how Katherine's emotional suffering changes her body:

Do you note
How much her grace is altered on the sudden? How
long her face is drawn? How pale she looks, And of
an earthy colour? Mark her eyes? (4.2.96-99)

The excess of humoral melancholy in her body causes the "earthy colour" to come over her body. When Caputius brings a message from the king who "grieves much for your weakness," Katherine explains,

O my good lord, that comfort comes too late;
'Tis like a pardon after execution:
That gentle physic, given in time, had cured me;
But now I am past all comforts here, but prayers. (4.2.121-124)

Like Jordan's patients who are cured simply by being able to believe stories, Katherine equates the kind words (from the man she still recognizes as her husband) with medicine. However, her body, which processes her grief and anger as it would a physical disease, is already too damaged. Like Falstaff after Hal's rejection, Katherine is unable to reconcile her self-narrative with the circumstances of her divorce. Her heart, both her literal life giving organ and symbolic emotional center of self, becomes weakened. After blessing

her husband and explaining how she wishes to be posthumously respected, she is led offstage to die.⁷

John Ford's *The Broken Heart* stands out as an examination of the narratives surrounding both metaphoric and literal heartbreaks. Ford fills the play with many discussions of figurative heartbreak. However, Ford complicates the heartbreak metaphor in the final scene, which stages and describes in great detail the moment that the heroine's material heart-strings literally crack. The dark tone of the play is set in the opening scene when Orgilus mournfully reveals that the woman he loves, Penthea, has been forced to marry Bassanes, a wealthy man, by her brother, Ithocles. Orgilus physically feels the weight of his sorrow and explains to his sister, "Souls sunk in sorrows never are without 'em./ They change fresh airs, but bear their griefs about 'em" (1.1.116-117). Soon after, he feels a fresh pain, when he overhears that same sister exchanging love vows with Prophilus, who is close friends with Ithocles. He feels betrayed and describes this emotional assault as a material torture of the organ of his heart: "Passion, O, be contain'd! My very heart-strings/ Are on the tenters" (1.3.91-92). For Orgilus, emotional pain is physical pain. Yet, although he claims that he would welcome the relief of death, his wracked heart-strings do not actually break.

⁷ Katherine's heart does not break on the stage but Shakespeare strongly implies that her sorrow will kill her. As Sullivan points out:

Although the idea of a broken heart may conjure up a sense of sudden acute pain that places great stress on the organ and quickly damages it, medical and literary writings emphasized that illness from sorrow often took hold gradually, slowly drying the body of moisture and causing it to wither away, which speeded up the natural process of aging... Shakespeare's plays echo this sentiment, suggesting that sorrow, like age, saps the body of its moisture. ("A Disease Unto Death" 166-167)

Penthea is also very vocal about her despair. After Ithocles forces her to marry Bassanes and she is “Compell'd to yield her virgin freedom up/ To him who never can usurp her heart,” she feels that she is no longer worthy of Orgilus’s love (1.1.51-52). Her sadness is written on her face, and before she even speaks, everyone who sees her is immediately able to recognize her internal suffering. Bassanes, her husband, tells her “This sadness, sweetest,/ Becomes not youthful blood,” and begs her “For my sake put on a more cheerful mirth;/ Thou 'lt mar thy cheeks, and make me old in griefs” (2.1.115-118).⁸ His request reveals that Bassanes, like Campeius and Wolsey, believes Penthea is in control of her self-narrative and that she ought to be able to “put on” a less despondent mood. However, Penthea, like Katherine, refuses to change her destructive self-narrative. Her passions cause her pain and will not even pretend to be anything other than despondent.

To what extent is Penthea actually in control of this sadness? The question of her emotional agency is complicated. She explains, “I have not given admittance to one thought/ Of female change since cruelty enforc'd/ Divorce betwixt my body and my heart” (1.3.56-58). Here, she imagines her body dissected and depicts her heart, the seat of her emotion, to be a separate entity from the rest of her material body; her body has been touched and consumed by her husband (who she does not love), but Penthea

⁸ Sullivan notes that “The emphasis on the dryness of both sorrow and aging leads to a strong correlation between the process of growing old and that of grieving in many of Shakespeare’s works (“A Disease Unto Death” 167). She provides many examples of Shakespeare equating sorrow and age: The Nurse, in *Romeo and Juliet* claims “These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old” (3.2.89); In *Richard III* the Duchess of York tells Richard, “Either thou wilt die by God’s just ordinance... Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish” (4.4.184, 86); Egeon, in *The Comedy of Errors*, explains to his son that he may not recognize him because “grief hath changed me since you saw me last,/ And careful hours with time’s deformed hand/ Have written strange defeatures in my face” (5.1.298-300).

describes her heart as an immaterial part of herself that has not been soiled by marital rape. Penthea use the word “heart” as a different metaphor when she explains to her brother’s love interest, Calantha, “’Tis long ago since first I lost my heart./ Long I have liv'd without it” (3.4.72-73). Of course, Penthea speaks figuratively; she has not lived without her life-giving organ. When she describes her heart as lost, she refers to her lost virginal identity, which was stripped from her the moment she was forced to enter into the marriage contract. Yet, neither Penthea’s shame of her union with Bassanes, unrequited love for Orgilus, or anger at Ithocles is strong enough a material force to kill her. In fact, she is able to forgive her brother and claims that she will even help him court his beloved Calantha on one condition: “If sorrows/ Have not too much dull’d my infected brain/ I’ll cheer invention for an active strain” (3.2.137). Clearly, her brain is not “too much dull’d” by sorrows, because in the next scene she approaches Calantha on Ithocles’s behalf with a set strategy. Penthea tells Calantha that if Calantha cannot love Ithocles, he will die of a broken-heart. Cunningly, Penthea explains,

But if you please to kill him,
Lend him one angry look or one harsh word,
And you shall soon conclude how strong a power
Your absolute authority holds over
His life and end. (3.5.100-104)

At this point in the play, it is easy to make the case that Penthea uses hyperbole as a manipulative ploy to encourage Calantha to consider Ithocles’s proposal. Ford seems to be mocking the notion that Calantha could ever kill Ithocles with a simple rejection. This is reminiscent of the mock-courtship scene in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Rosalind ridicules the lovelorn Orlando when he exclaims that his lover’s frown might kill him. Surely, like Rosalind’s frown, Calantha’s “will not kill a fly” (*As You Like It* 4.5.95). The

absurdity of the notion that Ithocles could die as a result of lovesickness is emphasized by the fact that Ithocles has already claimed to be broken hearted over Penthea's fate. He deeply regrets forcing her to marry against her will and takes full responsibility for his sister's broken heart. He describes how his lack of humoral control led to his decision to force Penthea to marry. He confesses,

Sad Penthea,
Thou canst not be too cruel; my rash spleen
Hath with a violent hand pluck'd from thy bosom
A love-blest heart, to grind it into dust
For which mine's now a-breaking. (3.2.42-46)

Yet, his breaking heart is still able to perform its function and continues to produce overwhelming passions that consume his body in love for Calantha. Although he physically feels the agony of his shame and "sweats in blood," regretting his horrible treatment of his sister, he is unable to actually die as a result of this emotion: "I consume/ In languishing affections for that trespass; Yet cannot die" (3.2.52-53). Furthermore, Ithocles soon survives the news of his own sister's death. Surely, if he can outlive that emotional assault, he can survive an angry look from Calantha, a woman who he barely knows.

Like her brother, Penthea cannot die of a broken heart. She calls for death after fulfilling her last promise to her brother: "My reckonings are made even. Death or fate/ Can now not strike too soon, nor force too late" (3.5.111-112). Yet, her waning animal spirit continues to animate her frail, shrinking body. Finally, she must take action. Much to the dismay of the other characters, she refuses to eat and finally succeeds in starving herself to death. Ford makes it clear that Penthea consciously chooses to starve herself and that her free will, not her humors or passions, is the agent of her death. Upon

learning of her death, Calantha speaks about Penthea's death as a victory, claiming, "She's happy; she hath finish'd/ A long and painful progress" (5.2.39).

By the end of the play, all of the metaphorically heartbroken characters (Penthea, Orgilus, and Ithocles) die. But, as Shakespeare's Rosalind would be quick to point out, "there was not any man died in his own person,/ videlicet, in a love-cause" (4.5.92). Like the famous heartbroken lover Troilus, who "had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club," and Leander, who Rosalind insists "would have lived many a fair year, though Hero had turned nun" if it had not been for a fatal foot cramp, Ford's characters do not die of their broken hearts. Penthea dies, not of heart-burst, but of anorexia.⁹ Ithocles dies, not as a result of a harsh look from his lover or grief for his sister, but at the edge of Orgilus's sword. Orgilus's heart does not spontaneously combust after he learns of Penthea's starvation. Instead, he willingly commits suicide; as he slits his wrist, he explains to his friends and to the audience, "I show cunning/ In opening of a vein too full, too lively" (5.2.122-123). The narrative producing, conscious, reasoning wills of Penthea and Orgilus bring about these deaths, not the overwhelming power of a material emotion. However, in the final scene Ford contrasts his figurative descriptions

⁹ Nancy A. Gutierrez reads Penthea's anorexia as both a social and political act. She convincingly argues that starvation becomes a way for early modern women to command control over their bodies and their social power in "'Starved! starved!': Anatomy and Food Refusal in John Ford's *The Broken Heart*," in *Shall She Famish Then?: Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England*.

of heartbreak with Calantha's literal heartbreak.¹⁰

Of all the characters in *The Broken Heart*, Calantha seems the least likely to be killed by overwhelming emotion. She is consistently portrayed as a model of temperance. When Ford first introduces Calantha, her father praises her "moderation,/ Calmness of nature, measure, bounds, and limits/ Of thankfulness and joy" (2.35-36). In fact, it is her excessive rationality, not her excessive passion that initially shocks the other characters when she learns about the deaths of her loved ones. In act 5, Calantha dances, preparing for her wedding feast. During her dance, characters enter, one by one, revealing horrifying news. First, she learns of her father's death, then of Penthea's starvation, and finally of the murder of her betrothed husband, Ithocles. Everyone expects her to break down, but she amazes both the audience and the other characters by continuing to dance. Armostes, her councilor, asks "Is't possible?" Bassanes exclaims, "Amazement dulls my senses," and Orgilus, who hears Calantha call for more music after he confesses to murdering her betrothed lover, stammers, "I am thunderstruck" (5.2.12-22). Calantha's only reference to her heart is to ask her musicians to play a song with a faster tempo to match her quickened heartbeat: "How dull this music sounds! Strike up more sprightly; Our footings are not active like our heart, Which treads the nimbler measure" (5.2.21-22). After concluding the dance, she pragmatically discusses the implications of each death. She recognizes that her father's death means

¹⁰ Donald K. Anderson notes that Ford's use of the heart in *The Broken Heart* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* reveals "imagery that not only is sustained but also progresses from the figurative to the literal" (209). In *'Tis Pity*, Annabella's heart is literally torn out because she defies society. However, Calantha, who yields to society, also has her heart physically broken. According to Anderson, Ford's message, in these two plays as well as *The Golden Meane* and *The Sun's Darling* is that "the pleasures of this life must be neither shunned nor abused" (217).

that she is now queen, describes Penthea's death as a victory, and calmly sentences Orgilus to death for murdering Ithocles. Like Shakespeare's Macbeth, who stoically states, "She should have died hereafter" upon learning of his wife's suicide, Calantha appears callously indifferent (*Macbeth* 5.5.17). Before exiting, she coldly states, "Those that are dead are dead. Had they not now died, of necessity they must have paid the debt they ow'd to nature, one time or other" (5.2.90). Armostes comments, "Tis strange these tragedies should never touch on her female pity" (5.2.95). Bassanes finds her unfeeling response less strange than inspirational and commendable:

She has a masculine spirit;
And wherefore should I pule, and, like a girl, Put
finger in the eye? Let's be all toughness, Without
distinction betwixt sex and sex. (5.2.95)

Bassanes imagines her "masculine" response as superior to the "girlish" response that he feels himself. Therefore, they are all further shocked in the next scene when Calantha claims,

A woman has enough to govern wisely
Her own demeanors, passions, and divisions.
A nation warlike and inur'd to practice
Of policy and labour cannot brook
A feminate authority. (5.3.9-12)

Armostes refutes her claim. After witnessing her govern her own "demeanors, passions, and divisions" so stoically, he is confident that he can trust her leadership abilities. He explains, "We have seen tokens/ Of constancy too lately to mistrust it" (5.3.16-17). Her emotionless, "masculine" response to the overwhelming news of so much death gives her authority over the men who might otherwise agree with her claim that a nation cannot be governed by a female leader.

After a long deliberation about inheritance and legal domains, Calantha undergoes a sudden transformation. Placing her ring on the finger of Ithocles's corpse, she reveals what her intentions have been all along: "Thus I new-marry him whose wife I am; Death shall not separate us" (5.3.66). She then tells the story that she has kept silent since the deaths of her father, friend, and husband were first revealed:

O, my lords,
I but deceiv'd your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news straight came huddling on another
Of death! and death! and death! still I danced forward;
But it struck home, and here, and in an instant. (5.3.66-70)

Although she has maintained her composure for a full act, she reveals that it was a facade, an icy mask hiding internal chaos. She describes the moment that the material substance of humoral sorrow struck her directly "here" (pointing to her heart) "in an instant." Unlike Penthea, whose diminished, failing body makes her interiority visible to the other characters, the internal workings of Calantha's body remain not only unpredictable, but wrongly predicted. The revelation that her heart has been broken all this while is much more shocking than her composure in the earlier scene (which her kinsmen initially misinterpreted as indifference). She becomes a bizarre and grotesque paradox; she is at once the dancing body of the calm, "masculine" queen, and the fatally wounded body containing an unsustainably shattered heart.

Calantha goes on to belittle women who do not hide their suffering: "Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries/ Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,/ Yet live to court new pleasures, and outlive them" (5.3.71-73). This reminds the audience of the many "shrieks and outcries" that we have heard earlier in the play. Of course, many of these shriekers were not women. For example, Calantha's beloved

Ithocles certainly “outcried” about his sorrow and guilt after forcing his sister into a fatally unhappy marriage. Yet, he lived to court the pleasure of Calantha’s love. By distinguishing herself from the “mere women” who can purge their sorrows by expressing them, Calantha suggests that communicating sorrow is a choice, and by suffering silently, she suffers more.

She concludes by claiming, “They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings; Let me die smiling” (5.3.74-75). This is a contradictory claim. On one hand, she is asserting that her grief is fatal because it is silent. However, it is only after she intentionally crafts and verbally expresses a narrative about the grief cutting her heart-strings that she actually dies. She gives Ithocles’s corpse “One kiss on these cold lips, my last!” and then says her final words: “Crack, crack! —Argos now 's Sparta's king. — Command the voices/ Which wait at th’ altar now to sing the song/ I fitted for my end” (5.3.76-79). By calling for the song, she reveals that she has carefully orchestrated her death. She must have known that she wanted to die in this place and at this moment for a long enough time to choose the song that her servants would sing for her final moments. With her words, “crack, crack,” she gives a narrative voice to those “silent griefs” and makes audible the inaudible noise of heart-strings breaking. Even as the strings of her heart literally crack, she never loses control over her self-narrative. It is as if Calantha, the story telling agent, and Calantha’s humoral body conspire to cause her death. The physical pain of the overwhelming sorrow in her heart is not enough. She has to make sense of the bodily sensation; only through the process of telling the story of her heart-strings cracking and giving the silent bodily events a narrative does she die. Even in this

moment of heartbreak, the quintessential example of the oneness of body and mind, there emerges an autonomous self who maintains agency over the narrative.

Cynthia Marshall also closely reads Calantha's death in order to explore what early modern depictions of heartbreak can tell us about the emergence of a modern autonomous self. However, while I argue that Calantha's heartbreak reveals how the developing idea of subjectivity interacts and coexists with the literally fluid self, derived from humoralism, Marshall is interested in how a heartbreaking work about heartbreak, like Ford's, "shatters the repose of viewers or readers" (2). Building on Greenblatt's theory that early modern cultural forces promoted an ideology of autonomous individuality, Marshall focuses on the conflict between the notion of the humoral self and the autonomous subject. She claims that autonomy aroused anxiety and fear because "there existed a well-established notion of individuality as both morally and ontologically suspect" (2). Therefore, the "aesthetic of shattering or self-negation took hold" of the early modern stage as a "counterforce to the nascent ethos of individualism" (Marshall 2). I find her reading very compelling and agree with her central claim:

An emergent sense of the autonomous self, individually operative as never before in the spheres of politics, religion, and commerce, existed in tension with an established popular sense of the self as fluid, unstable, and volatile. (4)

However, Marshall argues that violent Renaissance texts disperse— rather than affirm or stabilize—a sense of selfhood. According to Marshall's reading of *The Broken Heart*, Ford's intention is not to purge his viewers of passions. Instead, "the play encourages temporary eradication ... of the bounds of the self" and thereby helps playgoers achieve "a kind of mastery through submission to suffering" similar to that experienced by

characters in the play (Marshall 157). However, I argue that Calantha is not submitting to suffering. Rather, she is using her agency to control and manage the material stuff of her suffering body. Calantha's autonomous heartbreak does not destroy the notion of an abstracted selfhood as Marshall attests. For Calantha, fatal heartbreak is not sudden and spontaneous. Instead, her death is a desired and carefully orchestrated event. Although the play seems to indicate an irreducibly physical aspect to the "self," it also affirms that Calantha has an abstracted agency that is in control of her life narrative. Calantha is not merely the balance of her humoral fluids nor is she an individual agent, free of the bounds of her body and its passions; Calantha is the stories she tells about what her body does.

Shakespearian Heartbreak

As I argue in chapter four, Shakespeare's treatment of the internal warfare between embodied passions and conscious agency is inconsistent. Frequently, the stories that Shakespeare's characters tell about their material emotions and the actions of their bodies do not correspond; not everyone who wants to die of a broken heart actually does. Many characters will their hearts to literally break to no avail. Near the end of *King Lear*, when Edgar recounts the story of his father's death via heartbreak, he futilely cries out "O, that my heart would burst!" (5.3.181). In *Romeo and Juliet*, the passionate Juliet commands her metaphorically broken heart to literally break after she learns the Romeo has killed Tybalt: "O, break, my heart! poor bankrupt, break at once!" (3.2.57). In *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*, Queen Elizabeth attempts to take control over her material heart by telling the story of her grief. As she mourns the death of the young princes, Richard, speaking metaphorically, demands, "Harp not on that string, madam.

That is past” (4.4.295). He wants her to change her narrative. Elizabeth refuses and redefines his metaphor making the “string” not that of an instrument but that of her own heart-string; she defiantly states “Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break” (4.4.295). This harping becomes more than a metaphor because, through the process of speaking, she narrates her emotional pain as it is felt materially in her body. Both her embodied humoral grief and the story she tells herself about her grief, are literally rubbing her heart-strings raw. However, though she continues to speak, her worn, wracked heart-strings do not crack as Calantha’s do.

In *Henry VI part 3*, Queen Margaret is intensely aware of the power that she has over the narrative of her own heartbreak. After she watches her enemies stab her son to death, she begs them “O, kill me too!” and faints, materially overwhelmed by the horrific emotion (5.5.42). When she awakes, being denied her request, she rails against her son’s killers, failing to find words harsh enough for them. “What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?” she asks (5.5.57). Then, in a moment of self-preservation, she pauses her tirade, saying, “No, no, my heart will burst, and if I speak” (5.5.58). Immediately, she changes her mind, defiantly stating, “And I will speak, that so my heart may burst” (5.5.59). However, unlike Calantha’s, Margaret’s metaphorical heartbreak does not become literal. Katharina of Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* takes a different approach to narration and heartbreak. She isn’t concerned that her heart will break because she shares her story. Instead, Like Calantha, who claims that it is the silent sorrows that kill, she is concerned that being silenced by the husband who “means to make a puppet” of her is not just frustrating; it is physically dangerous. She claims, “My

tongue will tell the anger of my heart,/ Or else my heart concealing it will break”

(4.3.76-77).

In her essay “A Disease Unto Death,” which illustrates “how strongly many people living in and around the time of Shakespeare believed sadness to be a damaging, debilitating, and even deadly force,” Sullivan argues that Shakespeare frequently emphasizes “the importance of actively expressing sorrow, whether in the form of words, actions, tears or all three” in order to mitigate or control their grief and preserve their bodily health (181, 177). She points to Marcus’s response to finding Lavinia after her brutal rape and mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*. When he asks her who has done this to her, she is unable to respond; her tongue has been cut out of her mouth by her attackers. He says,

O that I knew thy heart, and knew the beast,
That I might rail at him to ease my mind!
Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopped,
Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is. (2.4.34-37)

Sullivan correctly reads this passage as Marcus’s desire to use words to alleviate his suffering. However, though Marcus does continue to conceal his sorrow, his heart does not dry up with grief. I argue that using words to narrate the tangible pain of an emotional experience is not necessarily a way of humorally purging. Both Marcus and the literally silenced Lavinia, like the shrieking women who Calantha belittles, live (at least for a time) to court new pleasures. The characters who actually die as a result of heartbreak on Shakespeare’s stage are not those who remain silent; it is not the inability to emotionally purge that breaks the heart. Instead, characters use the power of narrative not to cleanse

themselves of passions but to make sense of their passions. Thereby, they use their narrative agency to will their hearts to break.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare stages the moment that Enobarbus dies as a result of his overpowering emotion. After he deserts his friend Antony, Enobarbus is overwhelmed with guilt. He claims, “I am alone the villain of the earth,/ And feel I am so most” (4.8.30-31). This shame materially changes him: “This blows my heart./ If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean/ Shall outstrike thought” (4.8.34-36).¹¹ His heart is so swollen with the humoral stuff of passion that he expects to be able to break it with just a thought. He is certainly willing to commit suicide, but unlike Ford’s metaphorically heartbroken Orgilus who ends his life by slitting his wrists, Enobarbus knows that just feeling his self-hatred will be enough to kill him; “Thought will do’t, I feel,” he claims (4.8.36). He simultaneously gives both himself (the thinker) and the thought (an embodied material force) agency over his life. With his “blown” heart still intact, he wanders off stage, seeking out “some ditch wherein to die” (4.8.38).

Elyot describes the drying and cooling effect that “heaviness of the mind” has on the body: “it exhausteth bothe naturall heate and moysture of the bodye, and dothe extenuate or make the body leane, dulleth the wyt, and darkeneth the spirittes, letteth the

¹¹ Shakespeare elsewhere supports Enobarbus’s notion that grief can be enough to break a heart. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Leonato bids his daughter, Hero, to die from her shame when Claudio accuses her of adultery on her wedding day:

Do not live, Hero, do not ope thine eyes,
For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would on the rearward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. (4.1.122-26)

Leonato assumes that Hero will die without his intervention because he believes that her shame is stronger than her life spirit. By telling her to die, he also suggests that she should have the narrative control to manage her own death.

use and judgement of reason, and oppreseth memory” (D2r). Wright similarly describes how sadness impacts the organ of the heart and changes the temperature of body:

The cause why sadnesse doth so moove the forces of the body, I take to be, the gathering together of much melancholy blood about the heart, which collection extinguisheth the good spirits, or at least dulleth them; besides, the heart being possessed by such an humour, cannot digest well the blood and spirites, but converteth them into melancholy, the which humour being colde and drie, dryeth the whole body, and maketh it wither away. (E6v-E7r)

Enobarbus’s body has already been transformed in the exact ways that both Galenists predict. Melancholy, the cold, dry humor, has literally dried and cooled the organ of his heart. He describes his heart as being so “dried with grief” that it “will break to powder” (4.10.16). Despite this material transformation, like the dancing Calantha, Enobarbus does not immediately die. Instead, stubborn life, which he describes as “a very rebel to my will” hangs on him (4.10.11).

Two scenes after he originally declares his heart broken, a pair of Caesar’s soldiers discovers him, still alive, in the no man’s land between Antony and Caesar’s camps.¹² They see him muttering to the moon and move closer to hear him. When he falls to the ground, one soldier claims “But he sleeps” (4.10.23). The other soldier is less convinced and claims, “Swoons rather; for so bad a prayer as his was never yet for sleep” (4.10.24). When they try to wake him, both are surprised to find that “The hand of death hath raught him” (4.10.28). Before his sudden, strange, unexpected death, they overhear Enobarbus call upon the “sovereign mistress of true melancholy” (the moon) to wrap him in “the poisonous damp of night” (4.10.12-13). Like Brutus, who materially prepares himself to

¹² This location, physically situated between the two warring camps, is symbolic of Enobarbus’s conflicted loyalties.

kill Caesar by “stealing out of his wholesome bed,/ To dare the vile contagion of the night/ And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air/ To add unto his sickness,” Enobarbus relies on the ability of the night to humorally permeate him (*Julius Caesar* 2.1.263-266).

Enobarbus calls on the moon above him to,

Throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault:
Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts. (4.10.12-13).

He needs the moon, an outside agent, to interfere with his body, which stubbornly refuses to die. By willing the moon to further cool his body until the dry, cold organ of his heart turns to powder and breaks, Enobarbus, like Calantha, organizes and narrates his own heartbreak. By praying to the moon, he exposes a suicidal intention, but his choice is not a suicide in the traditional sense; he does not plunge a dagger into his heart or drink from a poisoned cup. Instead, as Erin Sullivan points out, “he wills his heart to break, a process that he narrates to his audience” (“Shakespeare and the History of Heartbreak” 934).

Other than Enobarbus’s, the only other literal heartbreak that Shakespeare chooses to stage is the death of King Lear.¹³ As I discussed in the previous chapter, any

¹³ According to Kenneth W Heaton, a medical doctor who systematically recorded every mention of a physical symptom or sign occurring in a character who was clearly experiencing strong emotion, Iras, Cleopatra’s servant, also dies of a broken heart on stage (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2.283). However, as A.M. Kinghorn points out, “Whether Iras died of grief, of heart-seizure or a prior asp-bite is of little dramatic consequence” (106). He explains that “Few critics make an issue of Iras’s sudden demise” (106 n.9). Kenneth Muir notes, ‘Iras dies first, either from grief or more probably from the bite of the asp. This could be made clear in production’ (*Antony and Cleopatra: Critical Studies*, 114). Many editors, including Nicholas Rowe, have both handmaidens apply the asp. Since we have no other examples of Shakespeare’s characters instantaneously dying of a broken heart on stage without first narrating their despair, I find the popular reading of Iras applying the asp more likely.

reading of Lear's death is complicated by the fact that one of the most notable differences between Q and F is the death of Lear.

Q reads:

Lear: And my poore foole is hanged, no, no life, why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all, O thou wilt come no more, never, never, never, pray you, undo this button, thank you sir. O, O, O, O.

Edgar: He faints my lord, my lord!

Lear: Breake hart, I prethe break.

And F reads:

Lear: And my poore Fool is hang'd: no, no, no life?
Why should a Dog, a Horse, a Rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never.
Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Looke on her? Looke her lips.
Looke there, looke there. *He dies*

Edgar: He faints, my Lord, my Lord.

Kent: Breake heart, I prythee breake.¹⁴

In chapter four, I discussed how the two extra F lines change the way that Lear's death can be interpreted. In Q, Lear, who had for so much of the play intrepidly fought off melancholy, is finally thoroughly overcome by it. In F, Lear dies in a moment of emotional conflict. The other subtle, but crucial difference that this textual crux exposes is the extent to which Lear is the agent of his death. In Q, Lear, realizing that his daughter is dead, like Enobarbus and Calantha, intentionally wills his heart to break and narrates the moment of his death. As he calls for his own heart to break, his self-narrative

¹⁴ The editors of the Norton Shakespeare insert the stage directions, [to Lear]. I want to argue that this editorial intervention is not necessary because the Kent of F more likely directs this command to his own material heart than to Lear's corpse.

and his embodied emotional material synchronously end his life. But in F, Lear, fleetingly believing that Cordelia lives, dies in a moment when he most desires life. In both Q and F, Lear certainly dies as a result of excessive emotion, which materially alters his body. However, is Lear's death in the F really a result of heartbreak? In Q, the story that Lear tells about what the materials in his body are doing is clear; he didactically explains that his grief breaks his heart. F is more ambiguous. What story does Lear tell himself in his final moments? Lear's ability to manage either his material emotion or his self-narrative is doubtful.

In F, it is Kent, not Lear, who attempts to use narrative to control his humoral body; he begs, "Breake heart, I prythee breake." Kent's command goes unheeded (at least for the duration of the staged action) but contextualizes his denial of Albany's request to help rule the kingdom: "I have a journey Sir, shortly to go/ My master calls me, I must not say no." Kent, who always defines himself as Lear's loyal servant, is metaphorically heartbroken at the moment of his master's death. After willing his heart to break, Kent tells the story of what is happening to his emotional body. He demonstrates the emotional management that the Lear of F lacks and uses narrative to will his metaphorical heartbreak to become literal. Ultimately, Kent's passions, swelling through his organs, act on their own accord, but by managing his self-narrative, he will perform his final act of servitude and willingly follow Lear to the grave.

Like Ford's Calantha, Shakespeare's Queen Katherine, Enobarbus, the Lear of Q, and the Kent of F craft narratives about the material changes in their organs, and thereby, will their hearts to literally break. Their heartbreaks are neither the result of a lack of control over their bodies nor a silencing of a dualist narrative. Instead, they are

moments of targeted agency. These deaths reveal the complexity of Shakespeare's portrayal of the mind/body relationship. Shakespeare slips between the dualist mentality of a mindful agent controlling and managing a body in motion and a monist approach to the body and mind as a unified, indistinguishable substance. Although, like his contemporary Galenists, Shakespeare understands that emotional anguish is consubstantial with bodily material, which can ultimately literally burst the material organ of the heart, he also gives power to a narrative making self. Therefore, in explaining the essence of emotion, Shakespeare uses the language of two contrasting worldviews. He continually blurs the boundaries between the body and mind while simultaneously recognizing their distinction.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In many ways, this project has been inspired by my friendship with Dr. Stephanie Golden. As I wrote this dissertation, she was completing her PhD in neuropsychology and working with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) patients at the VA Medical Center. Stephanie and I are close friends, but we are also very different in many ways. As Stephanie (and anyone who has spent any extended time with me) knows, my standard emotional state is usually a happy one and I consider my cheerfulness to be my defining characteristic. Stephanie is also a deeply joyful person, but can become exasperated with me because she more often experiences cheer as a hard-won victory rather than normative state of being. She is forthcoming about the fact that her struggles with anxiety and depression inspired her to dedicate her professional life to studying the ways that the brain produces the chemicals that we experience as emotion. After being diagnosed with clinical depression and beginning to manage her mental health through pharmaceuticals, she came to a realization: her depression is not her fault; she is not her depression. Stephanie is able to understand her experience of depression as a symptom of a physical ailment. As a diabetic can take insulin to manage blood sugar levels, Stephanie can take medications that change the way her neurotransmitters process chemicals like serotonin. Neuroscience, and the psychopharmacology it made possible, not only gives her access to medical treatment (which empowers her to manage her emotions), it also gives

her a new emotional vocabulary that she can use to think about and express what she is feeling. Now, when she can feel her depression getting out of control, she does not say to herself, “There is something wrong with me. I am sad. I want to be happy.” Instead, she can say to herself, “I am depressed. There is something wrong with the dynamic connectivity among my neuroanatomical structures involved in regulation of my mood and stress response. I want to either structurally, functionally or molecularly alter my brain.”¹ Of course, when she speaks about being frustrated with work, happy to see a loved one, or excited for a vacation, she says nothing about neurons, axons, and synapses. However, when she is feeling overwhelmed, struggling to control an emotion, or concerned about what her emotions mean and how she can change them, her vocabulary (and therefore her mode of contemplating the emotional) becomes increasingly material. In these situations, she describes mechanisms of the nervous system rather than using subjective emotional language.

When I first began to research the history of early modern emotion and Galenic humoralism for this project, we had a conversation that shaped my research questions. What began as a frank discussion about her depression shifted tone when she teased me about my perkiness. She told me, “You know, Dev, my serotonin levels are too low and yours are too high. I could find you a drug that might fix you too.” I was taken aback by how much her comment bothered me. Despite the many hours we had spent discussing emotion in material terms, I had never considered the source of my optimism to be a chemical imbalance. I had seen Stephanie transform from a person who was unable to muster up enough enthusiasm to leave her home, into the strong, confident woman whom

¹Language from “Neurobiology of Depression: an Integrated View of Key Findings” by V. Maletic, M. Robinson, et al.

I admire. I had come to believe that her body had been chemically imbalanced and by altering its hormonal makeup, she was able to be her “true self.” The phenomenological shift, which comes from conceptualizing emotion as material, empowers Stephanie. However, it frightens me. What if her comment about my being chemically imbalanced (albeit in a way which I experience in the form of joy, not depression) is true? If my personality can be defined by my brain’s chemical processes, then what will happen if I do something that inadvertently alters my body? Who will I be? How will I know myself? It is comforting to be able to claim, “I am not my depression,” but does that also mean that I have to confess, “I am not my joy?”

I found that the question I began to ask about myself (what am I if not my unique emotional engagement with the world?) is also of sincere concern to characters on the early modern stage. This the question that Jonson’s Thorello, asks as he struggles to understand and define his identity after his normally calm composure is materially overcome by a new passion. He unsuccessfully attempts to establish a self that is other than and autonomous from his humoral body. Shakespeare’s concerned Worcester asks this question about his rash nephew: What is Hotspur if not his choler? Can Hotspur ever be the rational leader that the Percy family needs? When an unnamed gentleman describes watching Cordelia go to war with her own passions, he raises a similar question: is the emotionally overrun Cordelia still the same woman who so calmly claimed that she could say “nothing” when her father demanded a declaration of love? Does Ford’s heartbroken Calantha still have an autonomous self as her body dies from the impact of destructive material emotion? Jonson, Shakespeare and Ford certainly raise questions about the conflict between forces of embodied passions and human

agency; however, for the most part, these questions remain unanswered.

This project has shown that, in order to make sense of emotion both my neurocentric contemporaries (like Stephanie) and early modern writers (like Jonson, Ford, and Shakespeare) use two contradictory systems of language: the monist, which assumes a that physical material (either neurochemicals or humors) can govern a body without regard to one's individual will, and the dualist, which assumes an autonomous self who maintains free will. The ability to fluctuate between the vocabulary of materiality and the vocabulary of subjective emotional language gives both the follower of neuroscience and the Galenist flexibility in creating self-narratives. Therefore, when Thorello "strives, even in despite of hell, myself to be," he crafts his self-narrative (*Every Man in His Humour* 1.4.207). His "self" becomes not just the motion of the material substance in the body, nor just an intangible being which exists independent of any physical forces; instead, he is both his material body and an autonomous agent. As Hotspur charges Hal on the battlefield, he is at once "altogether governed by humours," (as his wife asserts) and the willful master of his own destiny (*I King Henry IV*, 3.1.228). When Cordelia's rebel passions seek "to be king o'er her," she begins to cry, experiencing a material change in her body while simultaneously maintaining her unique identity; therefore, she becomes "sunshine and rain at once" (*The History of King Lear* 17.19). Even Calantha who literally dies of a broken heart, is never reduced to mere material nor able to establish a "self" that is entirely sovereign over her failing body. However, she maintains narrative agency and is at once, Calantha, the story telling agent, and Calantha, the humoral body. Both her narrative and her humoral makeup cause her death.

Like the early moderns, I maintain two contradictory beliefs: for me, the first is grounded in the neurocentric principal that “what there is and all there is, is physical” (Flanagan 594); the second (dismissed by Mudrik and Maoz as the “Double-subject Fallacy”) is that I am the owner of my body and that “I” can fight to maintain my “self” even if my neurochemicals change. For now, I have decided to embrace the inconsistency inherent in simultaneously holding these beliefs. Like the early modern stage characters, I both recognize that my emotional self is my material body and assert that I am the storyteller of my own self-narrative. My contradictory notion of self continues to be defined by the stories that I tell about what my body does.

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